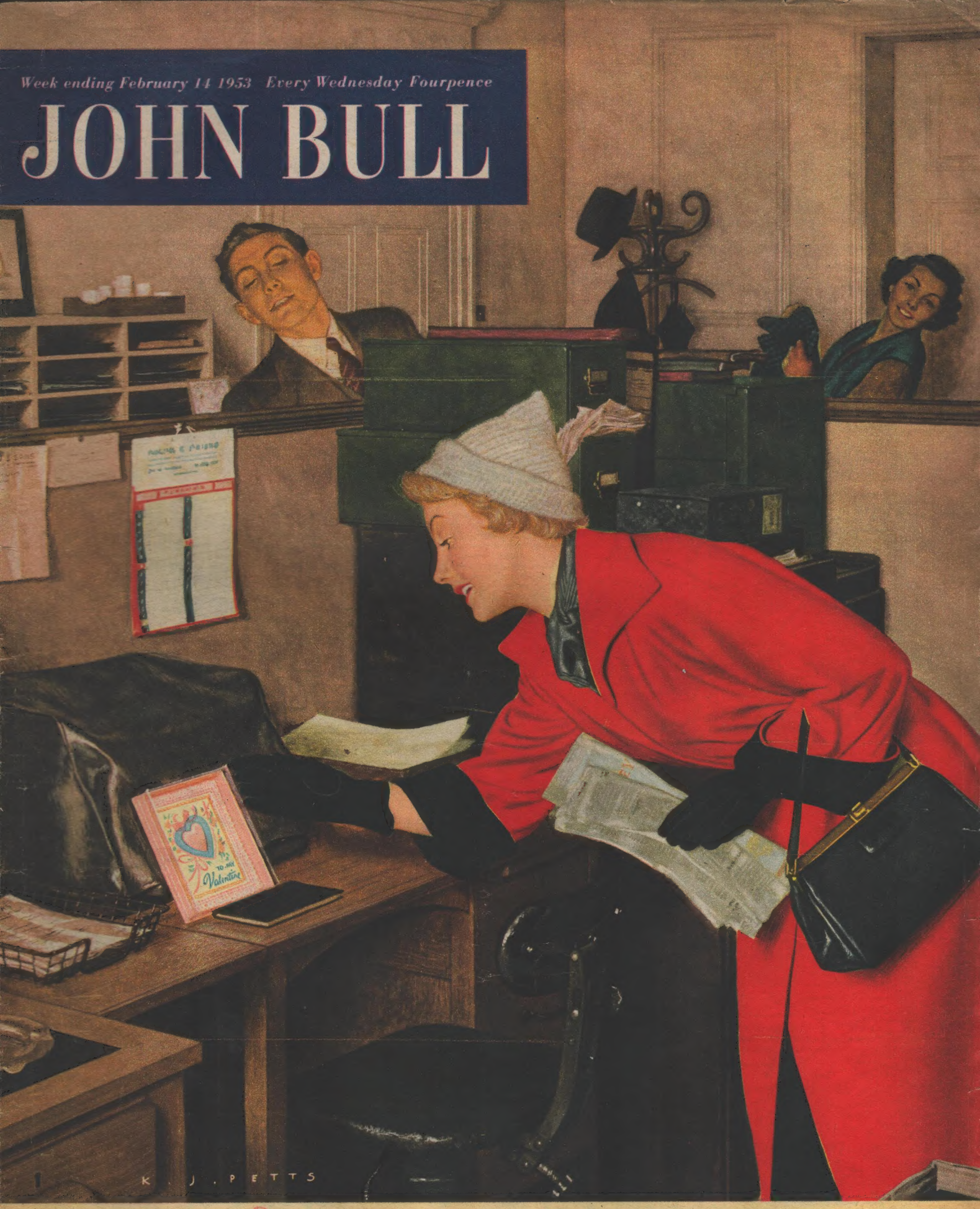
Week ending February 14 1953 Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

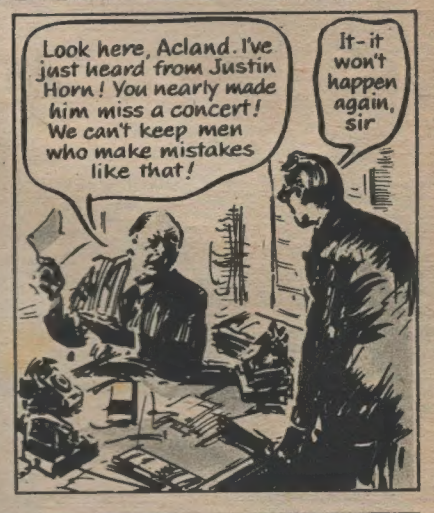


I MAKE MY WINDMILL DEBUT by JIMMY EDWARDS

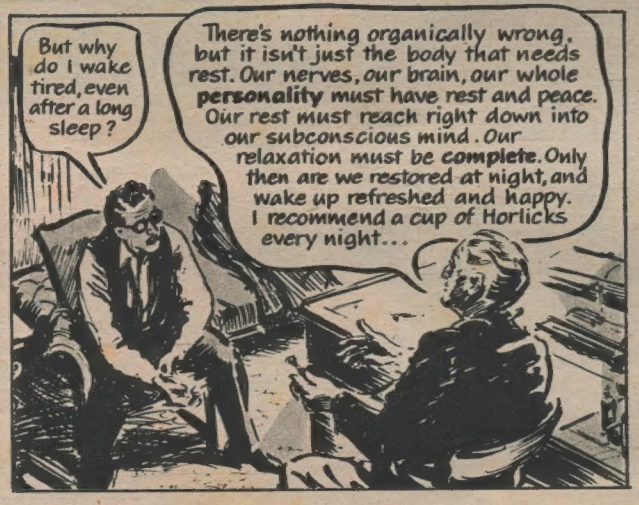
Travel Trouble

AT THE HOLBEIN TRAVEL AGENCY
OK, Acland. This is Mr. Justin Horn, the conductor. Arrange his trip for him, will you? I've told him you're our best man

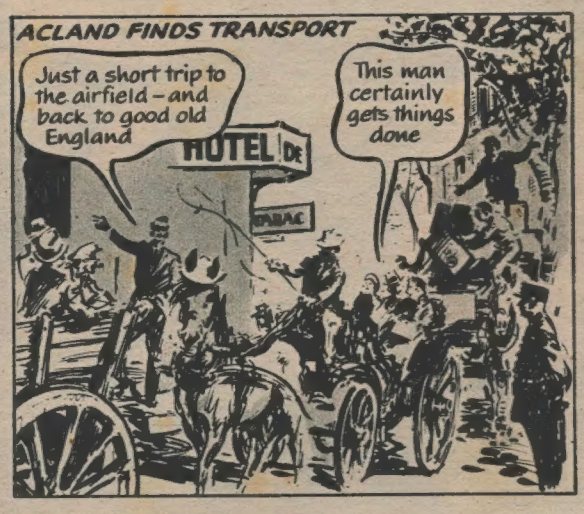
LE BOURGET
But, my good man, here it is in black and white. "Your plane leaves from Le Bourget"
I am sorry, sir. You have been misinformed. There are two airfields in Paris, you know. Your plane leaves from the other one


Look here, Acland. I've just heard from Justin Horn! You nearly made him miss a concert! We can't keep men who make mistakes like that!
It-it won't happen again, sir

...but the trouble is it will happen again. I seem so desperately tired these days I can't keep things straight in my mind. Can't think what's come over me
Darling, do go and have a check-up with the doctor


But why do I wake tired, even after a long sleep?
There's nothing organically wrong, but it isn't just the body that needs rest. Our nerves, our brain, our whole personality must have rest and peace. Our rest must reach right down into our subconscious mind. Our relaxation must be complete. Only then are we restored at night, and wake up refreshed and happy. I recommend a cup of Horlicks every night...

IN FRANCE
I've a meeting in Leeds tomorrow, and the English airlines are booked up!
My twenty-five pounds all gone!
Here's the man from the travel agency!


ACLAND FINDS TRANSPORT
Just a short trip to the airfield – and back to good old England
This man certainly gets things done
HOTEL
TABAC

"IF YOU COULD SEE YOURSELF ASLEEP . . .

"Have you ever watched people when they're asleep? Some look blissfully peaceful. Some seem worried. Some seem tense.

"And so they are. Tension grips them. They are asleep, but not relaxed. Their sleep is superficial; it is not reaching down, down to the subconscious mind. . . .

"To enjoy 'happy' sleep, there must be complete relaxation of mind and body. By promoting this tranquil state, and by helping to remove disturbing stimuli in the bloodstream and digestive system, Horlicks also helps you to wake up confident . . . restored . . . full of zest and optimism."

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RESTORES YOU BY NIGHT

EDITORIAL

Dis-saving

EVERY week the people of Britain put an average of 7s. 2d. each into National Savings. But every week they take out more—an average of eight shillings.

Last year's new savings amounted to only £941 million, £116 million less than the £1,057 million withdrawals.

Lord Mackintosh, chairman of the National Savings movement, says: "There never was a time when it has been so universally recognized that unless the country does save a great deal more than it is doing, we are in grave peril."

BUT there is no sign of any improvement. A recent survey by the Oxford Institute of Statistics showed that an estimated 9,600,000 out of the 22,000,000 "income units" in the country did not make any savings at all last year. And "dis-saving," as it is officially called, totalled £5,731,000 for the first week of 1953.

LORD MACKINTOSH
"Unless we save more..."

The truth is, of course, that the desperately high cost of living makes it almost impossible for many people to put money aside.

VISCOUNT BRUCE of Melbourne spoke out loud what many in the savings movement must feel when, in the course of a 1949 speech, he said: "No conscientious person can appeal to his fellow citizens to subscribe their money to savings if he knows in his heart that, when the hour of need comes to draw them out, they will not buy anything like as much as when the money was put in."

Yet, as Lord Mackintosh points out, £5 million a day is spent on cigarettes, drink and football pools. How can some of that be coaxed into the national money-box?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has been examining two ideas. One is for a lottery loan, with smaller rates of interest but weekly prizes of, say, £10,000 for holders of lucky bond numbers. This is done in Belgium and elsewhere with great success. He turned it down on the grounds that it would encourage gambling.

ANOTHER idea was a Commonwealth loan, specifically to help in developing the Empire. He turned this down on the grounds that savings should be used only for general schemes.

The cost of living must be reduced. That is the first essential. But the Chancellor should also re-examine these and other bold schemes to attract what spare cash there is.

The nation is ready to save—if saving is made as attractive as the alternatives.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

FEBRUARY 14 in Roman times was a feast day on which boys and girls chose their sweethearts for the year by lottery. In Victorian times—the heyday of the valentine custom—to send a card to a girl was tantamount to a marriage proposal. Nowadays the sentiment is more hard-boiled. The sad fact is that more girls send cards than men. Artist K. J. Petts prefers to keep up the illusion—though he says he's never sent a card in his life.

I MAKE MY WINDMILL DEBUT by JIMMY EDWARDS

"Sore throat?"

"I can't afford to lose my voices," says PETER CAVANAGH *(The Voice of Them All)*

A STAR WHOSE FAME and livelihood depend upon one thing — his voice — can't afford to take risks with his throat. On the night, Peter Cavanagh's many voices must be on call. And before the night, he must put in hours of practice.

Like many stage and screen stars, he takes MAC Throat Sweets. Not only at the first warning signs of irritation, but often before. It's a pleasant precaution to take. And it's the best and safest.

If you suffer from a sore throat, cough or catarrh, get a packet of these potent, palatable sweets. Get MAC Throat Sweets.

The medical reasons why MACs work

MACs kill dangerous, infectious germs because they contain Amyl-Meta-Cresol, a powerful germicide many times as strong as pure Phenol (R.W. Co-efficient 250).

MACs lubricate the throat and freshen the mouth because they contain camphor, pure sugar and tincture of Tolu.

MACs help to reduce swelling and irritation of the passages where catarrh lurks, because they contain Menthol: you inhale it as the sweet dissolves.

MAC BRAND
ANTISEPTIC
THROAT SWEETS
1/6 A PACKET

EXTRA CREAM added

LACTA FULL CREAM SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK

is called SPECIAL because extra cream has been added. Unsurpassed for all household purposes where milk and sugar are needed and excellent for the feeding of babies.

★ *During any shortage of canned condensed milk, Regal and Lacta may not be available in all areas.*

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The perfect combination in every kitchen!

FREE McDougall's sixpenny Cookery Book. Complete this coupon and post in an unsealed envelope (1½d. stamp) to: Miss Janet Johnston, Dept. 9 Wheatsheaf Mills, Millwall Docks, London, E.14.

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"...greater benefit than I thought was ever possible..."

"After suffering for many years from bronchial catarrh and bronchitis I have derived greater benefit than I thought was ever possible . . . I would definitely recommend it to anyone that suffers from the above complaints."
L. E., Coventry.
(Original can be inspected)

Lantigen 'B', taken like ordinary medicine, is specially prepared by skilled bacteriologists. It stimulates vital tissue cells to produce antidotes to combat and neutralise germ poisons. The Lantigen 'B' treatment costs only a few pence a day and it can be purchased at 1 guinea a bottle, plus 4/8d. P.T. Over 2,000,000 bottles sold throughout the world. Leaflet free.

. . . the oral vaccine treatment for

CATARRH & BRONCHITIS

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PRESTATYN HOLIDAY CAMP

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FREE! Send coupon to: Prestatyn Holiday Camp, Dept. PRE/2A/MG, Prestatyn, N. Wales, for coloured folder.

M .....
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Indigestion Vanishes

Another sufferer swears by 'Bismag':

"I used to suffer agonies with indigestion. It was just as if I'd eaten red-hot knives. A friend recommended 'Bismag' . . . I bought a bottle and it certainly did the trick. Now I swear by 'Bismag'—a couple of tablets and it's goodbye to indigestion."
(signed) R. C., Hitchin.

'Bismag' contains some of the quickest-acting ingredients known for neutralising stomach acid—that is why millions of sufferers all over the world, in 45 different countries, depend on this scientifically balanced antacid prescription in cases of indigestion, flatulence, heartburn and pain after meals. For quicker, surer relief ask your chemist for 'Bismag' (short for 'Bisurated' Magnesia)—75 tablets for 1/9d.

FREE SPEECH

The builder who dropped his bricks

WE moved into our new house last month after the builders had been held up for sixteen weeks by a shortage of bricks. Attached to the bill was a "Schedule of Increased Charges"—extras for sand, ballast and bricks which had risen in price during the building. After reading the bill I read a speech by the Minister of Works, who said, "We are on the edge of a great renaissance in British building."

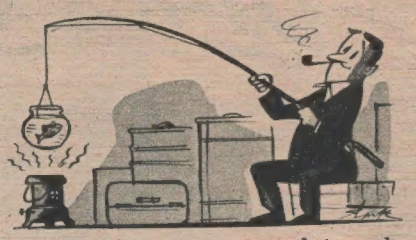
In the garden, I have already found the following items: fifty good facing bricks; two tons of sand partly covered by earth; a ton of ballast; three ten-foot lengths of conduit pipe; several pounds of galvanized nails; odd tiles, and a bag of concrete.—L. E. J., Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

Homes Horrific

ELECTRIC light bulbs, painted in red, white and blue stripes for the Coronation, dazzled me when I saw them on sale. Are horrors like these really bought and used? If so, there seems to have been a great decline in the good design of everyday things that was so noticeable in Festival Year products. The bulbs reminded me of the crude, catch-penny products of the 1930s.—Mrs. J. Lord, Bromley, Kent.

The Aquarist

THICK fog lay over the town, and all electricity had failed. We were enjoying a solitary candle when a friend, who lives half a mile away, knocked at the door. He was carrying a small stove which had run dry. I put on



boots and overcoat, groped towards the garden shed, extricated three bicycles and a mass of tools, and finally unearthed a funnel and a tin of paraffin. It contained about a tablespoonful. We coaxed this into the stove, tidied the shed and groped back to the house. At the door I said to him, "I suppose it's to cook your breakfast?" My friend replied, "No, it's to warm up the baby fish in my boxroom."—M. H., Hereford.

Significant Sale

URGENTLY wanting to sell her car, a friend who was removing advertised it for sale at £15. She got no reply. A week later it was advertised for her by an agent at its true value of £200. The car was sold within two hours.—K. E. W., Portsmouth, Hants.

Take It Away

LIKE many other office workers, my husband resents the use of leather cuff-savers on his suit. As soon as the cuffs begin to fray he buys a new suit. I have shown him William Kemp's fine photograph of "Professor" Jimmy Edwards (John Bull, January 17), which shows that J. O'Neil Edwards, M.A., is not above wearing them. So I can now start repairing those worn cuffs and save on new suits.—Mrs. K. M. N., Peterborough, Northants.

"There is leather on the elbows as well," comments Jimmy. "The suit was very near and dear to me a long time ago. The stage is a perfect place for wearing out clothes, for school-teachers are particularly careless about their dress, and I feel in character. But the wretched suit won't wear out." This week's instalment of "Take It From Me" starts on page 15.

TV In Church

WHY not televise the Coronation in churches instead of in cinemas? The Coronation is a religious service, and the church setting for its reception on TV would, I believe, be welcomed by many people. It might also encourage others to go to church regularly.—Mrs. A. E. Brown, Russell Road, Fishponds, Bristol.

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

"MASSACRE AT THE SPANISH FORT"

A thrilling new story
by FRANK O'ROURKE

Ancient Physics

IN the story, "The Terrible Ride Of Colonel Tessier" (John Bull, January 24), Gerald Kersh's hero compares the pain of a shattered nerve with a current of electricity. What could the colonel have known about electricity in 1815, or thereabouts? According to my encyclopedia it was not in use until the end of the nineteenth century.—T. W. Davis, Nelson Place, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

Electricity was known in 600 B.C. Dr. William Gilbert (1544-1603), Queen Elizabeth's physician, applied the term "electric" to the attraction of substances after they had been rubbed with silk or dry flannel. By the mid-eighteenth century scientists had established the main facts of static electricity. Before 1800 Sir William Watson found that electricity travelled from end to end of a two-mile wire.

Save The Children

THANK you for your editorial, "School and Crime" (John Bull, January 24). But available schools and teachers are not being put to the fullest use. My nine-year-old son is backward academically, yet on a visit to his school I discovered that his teachers were satisfied with his progress. They discouraged me when I suggested that he should do homework. Far too little time is spent on teaching the three R's, and far too much on the three P's—paint, Plasticine and puppets.—H. F., Essex.

. . . For years teachers have been stressing the need for smaller classes and more teachers required by the 1944 Education Act but, so far, not provided. Parents can help by writing to their M.P.s, interested organizations and councillors, giving facts about overcrowding and out-of-date buildings. They should also support their parent-teacher associations, and the salary claims of professional bodies, so that the most suitable men and women can be recruited.—E. F. Lloyd (Headmaster), Harborne, Birmingham.

. . . My husband's work takes him into many schools. In one he heard the teacher tell her class, "Now it's comic time, children." There was a great disturbance as comics found their way on to desks.—Mrs. H. W., Co. Durham.

Counter-attack

WHILE I was in a garage a salesman tried to sell a fire extinguisher to the owner. He talked rapidly for ten minutes, then poured petrol on the floor, lit it, and happily put out the flames with a demonstration model. When he could get a word in, the garage man pointed out that he already had an extinguisher. Before the crestfallen salesman left he had been sold a can of petrol so he could demonstrate his extinguisher to other prospective customers.—John Manson, Househillwood Road, Glasgow.

Going Shopping

ONE of your women readers asks ("Free Speech," January 24) why men shop better than their wives. Men who have to do this are pitied by shopkeepers who, in giving them "extras," know that they will not talk about it. Women customers would tell their neighbours how clever they were.—C. L., Edinburgh.

. . . I asked my husband to fetch the meat from the butcher, the only occasion in the year on which he had shopped for our rations. Instead of getting a choice cut, as I usually do, he came back with no meat at all. On top of that he had withdrawn the registrations of the whole family, and of my parents, because he had had a row with the butcher.—Mrs. G. H., Hull, Yorks.

Knight Aloft

TOP hats for chimney sweeps ("Free Speech," January 3) are popular on the Continent. In Berncastel, Germany, I photographed this young and very handsome sweep at work in a

topper. He wore it with a swaggering air, which seemed to say that his life was the finest in the world. He stands on a platform specially built for this job, and inserts his brushes through an opening in the side of the chimney.—Constance Burns, Bath.

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for repl

If only he'd told me!

I WOULD have understood. But instead, he was worrying what would happen to us if he lost his job, and then, of course, he had this nervous breakdown. Fortunately I always keep Benger's Food in the house, and that was the only thing he could take and retain because, being already digested, it did the work of digestion for him. Its rich nourishment soon built up his strength again.

And you should have seen the letter the firm wrote him — how he wasn't to worry and they would be glad to see him back at the office. Then, of course, I had a job to keep him in bed!

No other food is pre-digested like BENGER'S

DON'T WAIT till someone is ill. It's the first hours of weakness that matter. Be ready to give BENGER'S at once. The quicker you arrest weakness the quicker the recovery. So, just as you keep aspirin, laxatives or cough mixtures " in case," you should always have BENGER'S in the house. It has been the recognised family stand-by in illness for over half a century.

Always keep a tin of BENGER'S in the house

do you take cold . . .

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cut the bread
Now for toast and
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Golden Shred

He'll adore that *Silken Sheen!*

THE QUIET WAY YOU SMILE, your hair gleaming as you turn your head—these are the things he looks for and loves. Your hair can shine as softly as silver in firelight, with a smooth, silken richness — if you wash it with 'Vaseline' Brand Soapless Shampoo. It makes your hair so fragrantly clean — because it rinses out completely. Buy a packet today! Price 5d.

Vaseline* SOAPLESS SHAMPOO

Makes your hair clean—gives it silken sheen

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per bottle

IF you've a bottle of VENO'S in the house you can quickly get rid of a cough. VENO'S Cough Mixture removes the immediate causes of coughing. It soothes the irritation of a dry cough and loosens tenacious phlegm.

Whenever there's a cough in your house turn to VENO'S. It can safely be given to children.

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with massage BRYLCREEM ensures a clean scalp, free from dandruff

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BRYLCREEM contains no gum, no soap, no spirit, no starch.

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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Issued by the National Savings Committee

Two of the Sherpa porters at the Nanga Parbat base camp. Their refusal to risk the winter climb was a bad setback. But there was worse to follow

WE CHALLENGED THE WORLD'S CRUELLEST MOUNTAIN

by RICHARD MARSH

Nanga Parbat ("Naked Lady") is a spectacular and notorious mountain in the Himalayas. More men have been lost on it than on any other peak in Asia. Four expeditions to it have ended in disaster, and none has succeeded. This is the story of the fourth disaster: "a tragedy which began with light hearts and high adventure, a disaster which should never have happened"

Richard Marsh

THERE WERE THREE of us, twenty-seven year old Jim Thornley, from Southport, tall and wiry, the toughest and most determined man I have ever met; Bill Crace, twenty-four, an ex-Gurkha officer from Norfolk, shorter and thicker in build than Jim and more even in temperament; and myself, also twenty-four, slighter in build than either of the others.

We left England in July, 1950. At that time, Nanga Parbat was no more in our thoughts than the North Pole. We were off for a year's exploration, surveying and climbing in an unmapped region of three thousand square miles way up in the Karakoram Mountains on the northern borders of Pakistan. It was something for which we had been planning and saving for three years, ever since our return from India, where we had climbed together during army leaves. The Pakistan Government had fully sanctioned our trip. In fact, one of our plans was to clarify the Chinese-Pakistan border in this unexplored land.

We arrived in Rawalpindi in the middle of August. We flew north over the main range of the Himalayas to Gilgit, and from there spent the next four weeks moving up country on foot. En route, a bout of fever forced us to split into three parties, but by September 14 I had reached Shimshall, 170 miles out—the last village right on the edge of the unexplored "Promised Land." I had been waiting there nine days for Jim and Bill, when one evening two runners arrived with a telegram which read: UNDER ORDERS FROM PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT YOU ARE REQUIRED NOT TO PROCEED FARTHER BUT TO RETURN TO GILGIT IMMEDIATELY.

In a three-day forced march—and considerably upset—I hurried back to Bill, eighty miles away, and later on to Gilgit and Rawalpindi, where Jim was already arguing with the government. For three weeks we reasoned with officials, trying to change their minds, but they would not even give an explanation for this sudden and disconcerting change of face. We decided to make some alternative suggestions, and it was then that Nanga Parbat was first mentioned. We also decided that if all the proposals we put to them were rejected we

The three who challenged Nanga Parbat: Jim Thornley, the leader, wading through deep snow

Richard Marsh. "It is somehow satisfying to defy the elements," he wrote in his diary

Bill Crace. Even when the setbacks multiplied, not one of the three considered turning back

would say to hell with them and make an illegal reconnaissance on Nanga. The expedition had cost us £2,000—all the money, and more, that we had. With us were four of the finest Sherpa porters, a year's food, and some of the best equipment in the world. We were determined not to return home with nothing achieved.

We had few illusions about Nanga Parbat. It is the seventh highest peak in the world, and its gigantic mass of ice and rock stands 26,660 feet high in superb isolation at the western end of the Himalayas. It is the most tragic of all mountains. Of seven reconnaissances and attempts to reach the summit, four have ended in disaster and none has succeeded. On the first assault, made by a British party in 1895, three men, including the great pioneer, Mummery, were lost. In 1924, four Germans and six porters died in a blizzard. Three years later, sixteen members of another German party were overwhelmed at night by an avalanche. Ours was the fourth disaster, a tragedy which began with light hearts and high adventure, a disaster which should never have happened.

Code Signal To Start

While Jim hung about listlessly for the Pakistan Government to make up its mind, I went back to the Hunza Valley to help Bill to bring up our equipment into Gilgit. We sent a cryptic wireless message to Jim: MARSH PREFERS NAKED LADIES IMMEDIATELY CRACE PREFERS GLACIERS. The reply a few days later was equally cryptic but less humorous: MINISTER REFUSED EVERYTHING SUGGEST YOU MOVE OUT SOONEST. This last phrase was a code to signify that we would meet again on the slopes of Nanga Parbat.

On October 31, I left Gilgit early in the morning with two of our four Sherpa porters, two donkey drivers and ten donkeys carrying ten weeks' high-altitude food and equipment. I had told the authorities that we were going over the passes on foot to Rawalpindi. Bill and the other two Sherpas stayed behind in Gilgit for two days, supervising the dispatch of surplus equipment by air. Jim, meanwhile, was setting out north from Rawalpindi "just to accompany us back along the River Indus."

We knew that our chances of reaching the summit of Nanga were remote. What we really intended was to find out whether there was another method of tackling the mountain. No one had ever tried to climb any peak within a thousand miles of Nanga during the winter months. All previous attempts on the mountain had been made in the middle of the year, and all had been beaten back by avalanches and ferocious blizzards. There was a possibility that, in November, when it was colder and there was less snow falling, there would be much less thawing and correspondingly fewer avalanches to worry about. We hoped to reach 20,000 feet; that would provide us with some useful information. Only if conditions were unexpectedly perfect would we have a shot at the top.

Crazy Switchback Route

For three days we shepherded the donkeys down the parched, sandy Indus basin, then into the twisting gorges of the Himalayas. As the river cut narrower and deeper into the fierce, towering walls of rock, the track hugged the cliffs like a crazy switchback. In places it was only a couple of yards wide, with a thousand-foot drop into the brown, swirling river beneath. Sometimes two donkeys would barge into one another and the hind legs of one of them would slip over the edge of the cliff. There were some anxious moments.

And then, at a bend in the river, the barren scenery was suddenly broken by the Rakhiot suspension bridge. Across the bridge we would be on the foot of Nanga Parbat, and so far no one had questioned our movements. Bill and the other two Sherpas, who had just caught us up, told me of a village headman who had nervously asked him whether he was the advance guard of a Russian invasion.

We camped on the far side of the river, paid off the donkey men and had dinner. The four Sherpas, we discovered, were not sharing our excited anticipation, though they were the best men from Darjeeling. During the evening we were surprised to see them all saying their prayers. Only my servant, Ang Temba, the youngest, had said them before.

Tenzing, their leader, was one of the finest men I have met. He had been on four Everest expeditions. In 1938 he had carried loads up to 27,000 feet; no porters, and only a handful of Englishmen, have ever been higher. He had travelled all over the Himalayas, India and Tibet. All four could cook and sew and laugh at themselves.

Time For The Big Effort

The morning after we crossed the Rakhiot Bridge the ascent of Nanga Parbat began in an unexciting fashion, with Bill going up to the village for porters. On a mountain of 20,000 feet or more, climbing is not at all the spectacular performance it sometimes is in the Alps. The route to Nanga's summit was many miles long, the last ten or twelve of which were snow covered. For such a climb, several weeks must be spent establishing a series of camps and, instead of a rucksack, numbers of porters are needed to carry the stores. It is a test of endurance. The greatest effort is needed when the air is thinnest and the cold most intense.

Tattu, the last village between us and our objective, lay up a high-walled valley leading to one of the mountain's numerous glaciers. It was a steep, rocky climb—five thousand feet in six or seven miles—and I was surprised to see the porters, who had been sent down from the village by Bill, arriving at the camp with one or two donkeys that same evening. But hopes of an early start the next morning were quickly dispelled. Their leader said that they each wanted twenty rupees—more than £2—for the day's work. Briefly, I told them that on those terms we would do without their services, and went to bed.

Next morning, the Tattu man eventually said that they were prepared to halve their price. I shook my head. The Tattus sat down to watch developments. I called their bluff, loaded the Sherpas and sent them off up to the village, loudly instructing them to ask Bill to return and help us to relay the kit up ourselves. Presently, the Tattu leader started bargaining all over again. At last he came down to five rupees, and we finally settled it at four.

Thieving Made Me Desperate

The Tattus had a formidable reputation for thieving—they had almost ruined two of the German expeditions—so I insisted that they were to keep close together so that I could watch them, and that if anything were stolen they would get no pay. This upset them very much. They said they should pay only for the items they stole.

We loaded up and were away. The party consisted of twenty-five evil-smelling Tattu men and myself. The men at the front scuttled on as fast as they could, while at the rear they were loitering. Very soon, the column was spread over a quarter of a mile, and no amount of shouting made any difference. Some of them sat down for a rest and, while I exhorted them to get up, I could see the others in front dodging behind boulders and frantically rummaging through the pack. Desperately I visualized precious quantities of our high-altitude rations disappearing. "*Badmash tum* —you devils," I yelled—and more, but without effect. They got up, grinning stupidly, in their own good time.

In the customary parley with some village elders we were told that it was madness to climb

"Such a climb is not a spectacular performance. It is a test of endurance." At Base Camp, Jim Thornley is helped to his feet with his 120 lb. load

on Nanga Parbat. It was impossible, they said, and meant certain death. This was not based on any rational appreciation of the mountain's difficulties The Tattu people, like all those who live near the great mountain, regard it as the home of the evil spirits which bring disease to themselves and their animals, and storm and blight to their crops. The elders told us of giant creatures who live on the summit and throw down boulders and blocks of ice on anyone who tries to reach their fortress.

We smiled at their stories; but the next morning we were far from amused. We had briefly checked our packs and were just eating breakfast when Tenzing came over to us. He had an open, honest face, and this morning he was looking very troubled.

"Sahibs," he said, "I am sorry. Ang Temba, Ajiba and Phu Tharkay do not want to come above Camp One. It is too dangerous. They have families and the risk will be great. If they had realized you were really going to climb on Nanga Parbat, they would not have come. I am sorry, sahibs."

We sat stunned. Tenzing stood away downcast, miserable that he had let us down. There was no point in arguing. We realized that their decision was partly due to the stories they had been hearing from the local villagers. It is difficult for Europeans to understand how these hill people, who dwell continually under the shadow of the great mountains, live in awe of them. Bill and I briefly discussed the situation and, knowing what Jim would want to do, agreed to carry on. But with only Tenzing and the three of us, the work—and the risk—would be doubled.

Like A Giant White Palace

From just above Tattu that morning we saw the whole face of Nanga Parbat for the first time. As we turned a corner, the vast northern precipice was unveiled, rising starkly and superbly from the head of the valley like some giant white palace in the sky. The sun, glinting on the ice, gave to the mountain a translucent, cruel beauty. Soon we were in a pine forest with the first cool breath of wind reaching down from the glacier on to our sweating faces. In the early afternoon, we broke through the trees again on to a magnificent open pasture which seemed to lie directly under the mountain face and was aptly named "The Fairy Meadow." The Tattu men refused to go any nearer the dreaded mountain, so we paid them off and made camp.

That evening Jim arrived, and we were all together for the first time in nearly three months. In six days he had travelled 165 miles on foot right over the main range of the Himalayas, crossing, among others, a 14,000-foot pass in a blizzard. Having no kit with him, he had worn only a shirt, sweater, trousers and plimsolls, and had slept out in the open. A friend in Rawalpindi had sent a professional mountain guide named Risuka along with him to show him the way. Characteristically, Jim had outstripped him, and joined us a day before the exhausted guide.

Much Worse Than We Hoped

After his exertions, we persuaded Jim to take a day off, and the rest of us began relaying the equipment up to the site for our base camp right under the great walls of the mountain. Now we really began to see something of the strength of the Sherpas—and to appreciate how much we were going to miss the three during the coming days. Bill and I found the going tough with up to ninety pounds on our backs; the Sherpas cheerfully carried a hundred pounds and more.

The following evening—November 9—Base Camp was fully established at 11,500 feet, just below the snow and at the highest point where there was running water. Early the next morning, Jim and I set out to reconnoitre the route to Camp One. For the first time we were now on the mountain proper. For two hours we toiled up a steep ridge alongside the Rakhiot Glacier to our first objective—Moraine Hill, at 15,000 feet. Looking up from the bottom of the hill, we estimated that it would take an hour to climb the last 1,400 feet in what looked like a foot of snow. We had a shock. The snow was mainly waist deep, and the climb took four and a half hours. Tired and rather shaken, we turned back to camp. Conditions looked like being much worse than we had hoped when we decided to make the attempt.

That evening we sat thoughtfully round the fire and talked of many things. The stars shone brightly from a silent, velvet sky. The great mountain stood majestically outlined above us and the night was still, save for the occasional roar of an avalanche cascading down from high up on the face. We knew that this was the last fire we would be sitting round for some time.

Perhaps Jim did suspect, in that strange, uncanny way of his, what the future held, but surely he could not have known that this was to be the last comfortable night he and Bill were ever to spend.

Next day we set off with heavy loads for Camp One. On the other side of Moraine Hill we roped up. The glacier was cut about with many crevasses, but the snow was firm and we found strong snow bridges without trouble. For several hours we worked our way up and across the glacier like ants zigzagging over the huge waste of snow. We stopped at about four o'clock at 14,650 feet on a level stretch of snow, not well sheltered from the wind, but as safe from avalanches as possible.

Digging In For The Night

Bill and the Sherpas, who were going to bring up the other equipment next day, dumped their loads and started back for the advanced base. Jim and I quickly dug out two feet of snow and, as fast as frozen fingers would allow, put up the specially designed high-altitude tent, threw in all we wanted for the night, and scrambled in. To Bill and the Sherpas looking across at us from the top of Moraine Hill, it must have seemed rather forlorn—a tiny tent set beneath a tremendous white amphitheatre of avalanche-swept faces soaring two miles above.

As darkness fell, a rising wind moaned through the guy ropes and the temperature dropped rapidly. We lit the primus, melted some snow and boiled the water for tea. "*It is certainly bleak,*" I wrote after the meal, "*but somehow satisfying to defy the elements like this.*"

The next morning we began with a mistake. We got up too early. In that temperature we

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Sleepy death at Hollingarth

by ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY SHOWELL

Nancy was aghast. The animals were dead, her father unconscious. Had her fiancé gone stark, staring mad?

THE ROW BETWEEN Albert Barr and Tom Miller started over brackens. For something like thirty years brackens have been on the increase, and unless you put them down three times a season they blot out the grazing under a tangled, feathery sea of fronds. They poison young beasts innocent enough to browse on them, and a diet of the stuff can kill hardy Herdwicks.

Tom Miller, of Scarthbank, slaved to ensure his own intakes were free of brackens. His neighbour, Albert Barr, never seemed to bother. A party wall of dry stone offered no barrier; the shoots were continually snaking through into Tom's pasture. That was enough to enrage any young man with his heart in his farm and a purpose to build up a good Swaledale flock.

When he complained, he did his best to put it in a friendly way, because he happened to be keen on the old man's daughter, and I must say I admired his choice. Nancy was a small, brisk young woman, with very clear blue eyes, efficient and uncompromising. She must have taken after her late mother, for we all knew Albert Barr as a feckless, roundabout sort of chap who seldom looked you in the face when talking, and was slack in his farming.

Albert, I gather, gave some sort of promise, but, typical of him, he did little. It was awkward for Tom. He could hardly say all the the rough things he wanted to say to the father of the girl he loved, and it meant he had to spend extra time slashing at the brackens trespassing on his intakes.

I met Tom one morning, and he unburdened himself about it.

I said to him: "What does Nancy think about it?"

His slim face crinkled ruefully. "I've got to go careful there. She must know well enough what kind of lazy gowk he is, but she won't admit it to me. She's a great girl. Beats me how the heck he ever had such a bonnie daughter."

The next news we in Iredale heard came that autumn, and it was a deal more serious. Albert Barr was letting his three Herdwick rams—tups we call them—roam free. Now that is a bad and selfish practice, and against the law. With autumn the rams start to generate the breeding urge, and given the chance they will go careering among the ewes on the open fell. It leads to lambs being born before the winter is out, prey to savage weather and hungry foxes and carrion crows. So we confine tups to the intakes and dale fields, and chain them in pairs to stop them from jumping the walls.

For Tom, there was an added danger. The lambs would have a Herdwick strain, instead of pure Swaledale.

This time, he not only went for Albert. He spoke to Nancy on the matter.

"Much o' that," he ended up, "and I'll be losing a lot o' money. You must see that, Nancy."

Nancy was distressed. She said little, but he could see that she meant to do something about it.

Two days later Tom spotted on a grassy ridge high above his farm the three tups, still free. Furious, he whistled a dog, went up at speed, and drove the swaggering, chunky trio back to the nearest Hollingarth intake. As luck would have it, Albert was pottering nearby, replacing a few stones on the wall. Tom let him have it hot and strong.

"If it weren't for Nancy, I'd tell the police. You're not fit to be a fell-farmer!"

In his maddening way, Albert kept his eyes fixed on the distant, towering peaks, and said with a slow smoothness: "Mebbe there's nay harm done."

"Mebbe my foot! It's more than time you were taught a lesson." Such was his rage, he felt an itch in his fists, and made off fast, lest he should use them, and lose Nancy as the result.

That last encounter must have taken some effect on Albert, for next morning he harnessed his horse, loaded some coils of wire into the cart, and steered it up to the intake.

Unloading the coils, he set about rewiring the barrier. It was a job he should have seen to months before, but he took his time over it, and returned to the house, travelling at his usual dawdling pace.

"I've done the job," he told his daughter.

"About time, too," said Nancy, who had heard a one-sided account of yesterday's incident. She was unhappy over this trouble between Tom and her father. She could see Tom's point of view plainly, but with Barr blood in her, she felt an inevitable measure of loyalty towards the old man.

"He's been making a lot o' fuss over nowt," said Albert. "Too impatient by half."

IN the morning he had the shock of his life. Plodding through the intake gateway he saw his three Herdwicks sprawled on the ground, quite still. They were dead. There were no marks on them. He gaped at those bulky corpses with their massive horns, and his lips drew back, and his teeth showed in a vicious clenching. Those tups had been poisoned. There was nothing else to explain it. It could have been done with laurel, or an overdose of sheep medicine. Tom Miller must have been along in the night and fettled them off.

Thickly, he said aloud: "The young swine! He'll pay for this."

Back he went to Hollingarth. The distressed Nancy refused to believe Tom capable of such a trick. Yet reason told her it was a thousand to one against the three tups dying at the same time from natural causes. Miserably unhappy, she begged her father to go to Tom at once.

Instead, he went down to the Bridge Inn to phone the vet. To the few folk he met, he gave a savage account of what had happened.

In a matter of an hour or so, our bush telegraphy had spread the news throughout Iredale.

The vet drove up, and took away one of the tups for an autopsy. Next day, he called at Hollingarth.

"That ram was poisoned," he said. "But

Though Nancy was terribly distressed, she kept

wonderful control of herself. Together, we managed to lower the old man on to the parlour couch

I'll be perfectly frank, Mr. Barr. The actual nature of the poison has defeated me."

"That's good enough for me." Albert clenched a fist and swore. "I'll have the law on that Miller."

The vet said reasonably: "You'd better be careful. Suspicions in themselves aren't evidence. He might take you up for slander."

"Him, who's poisoned them three tups!"

The vet sighed. He knew his man. "Anyhow," he said, "if you're sensible, you'll go warily."

BUT that was the last thing Albert intended to do. His tongue went on wagging. The story spread far and wide. Unfortunately, Tom had gone to Lancaster, leaving a hired man in charge, and somehow his absence just then was reckoned to be significant.

He came back on the Wednesday, and the hired man told him what was going around. He made straight for Hollingarth. Albert had chosen that morning to remove the now unwanted wire from the intake posts. Tom spotted him above, and went up the shallow slope with a taut look on his face.

"What's this you've been saying about me, you liar?" he bawled.

Albert came towards him across the intake. "You ought to know. My tups were poisoned. Vet says so."

Tom stuck out his chin. His eyes were dangerous. "Does he say I poisoned 'em?"

"He doesn't have to say that. I know. The dale knows."

Something clicked inside Tom's brain. He never intended to, but he lashed out, and his fist took Albert smack on the temple. It was a fairly heavy blow. Albert toppled backwards and lay there, groaning. Tom sucked his knuckles and walked off. He was trembling with rage and fairly upset. Nancy would never forgive him for this. He felt so bad, he needed a drink, and headed for the Bridge.

I saw him there, white-faced, keyed-up, his knuckles raw. He blurted out what had taken place. It was difficult to make any comment. I said something about it being a pity, and went up to see Albert with the idea of trying to bring a bit of reason between them. As I approached the intake, I saw Albert still lying on the ground. That startled me. I broke into a run.

The sight of him at close quarters would have alarmed anybody. He was an awful colour, his breathing weak and choked. Scared, I heaved him over my shoulder, hurried to the nearest beck, splashed his face, and laboured on with him down to the farmhouse.

Poor Nancy kept wonderful control of herself. She helped me lower him upon the couch in the parlour, rushed to the other room for brandy, and trickled it between his lips. She was obviously terribly distressed.

I said quickly: "I'd best fetch the doctor. I'll be off to the phone."

On my jog-trot way to the Bridge, it occurred to me that Tom must have landed him a terrible blow. How else could he have left his victim in that state? I phoned the doctor first, before telling Tom of the damage he had done.

Tom stared at me in amazement. "It was only a clip," he said.

I said harshly: "A queer sort of clip. Reckon you'll be lucky if he lives."

He stared at me incredulously.

I nodded. "Ay, that's how things are."

Very shaken and bloodless, he muttered: "I can't make it out. I'll come back with you."

Fast, and in silence, we returned to the farm. Nancy opened the door. To me she smiled and said: "He seems a little better." To Tom she turned eyes that were blue ice. "Have you gone stark, staring mad?" she said. "Keep out of here, and never come near me again."

"But, Nancy——"

She gave him one final, denouncing look, and turned her back on him. He walked away in a kind of sick droop, and I pitied him.

AFTER what might have been twenty minutes, the doctor arrived. He spent a while examining Albert. Since there was no sense in attempting to hide facts, I told the doctor what I knew of the affair. He said, with obvious puzzlement: "It's very curious. The abrasion on the temple is nothing much. If he had struck the back of his head on a stone there would have been some sign. His condition seems more akin to asphyxiation than anything else. However. . . ." He patted Nancy's shoulder. "Don't worry, young lady. He's mending."

Not until after he had gone did she lose hold of herself and burst into tears.

"I never thought that Tom was. . . ." Her voice trailed away.

It was hard to find words of comfort, but I did my best. I had a sense of deep pity for both those young people. They loved each other, and that was the end of it.

I was still meditating about them the next morning. It gave me a feeling of depression.

A little after midday I was due at Greyhaven, to attend a club lunch. I was quite glad to go and forget the troubles of Nancy and Tom.

The lunchtime speaker was a Dr. Perry, a scientific adviser to the National Coal Board. He told us a lot of interesting stuff about mines past and present, their geology and so forth, and mentioned how many of those in West Cumberland, worked in previous centuries, had become disused, resulting in subsidences at a later date.

Somebody introduced me to him after he had

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Stage manager Peter Green gets directions from Wauna Paul, while Derek Farr and Joan Newell rehearse for *Murder Mistaken*. To put on a show costs £4,000

Wauna Paul invades a man's world

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

In the West End, every other show is a failure. The only woman impresario needs all her "angels" to make winners balance losers

A FEW DAYS AFTER *Don't Lose Your Head* opened at London's Saville Theatre in August, 1950, the stage manager walked into the office of the firm that presented the play. The room was filled with red, blue, yellow, orange and green balloons and, seated at a table blowing them up, were the leading man, his wife and two children. "What's happening?" demanded the stage manager.

"Don't ask questions," he was told, "just take some balloons and start blowing."

The order came from an energetic, thirty-eight year old blonde who stands five feet five inches tall and weighs twelve stone. She is Wauna Paul, the only woman theatrical manager in the West End and, even in theatreland, an unorthodox personality. "Wauna," says Peter Green, who is still her stage manager, "had decided to whip up public interest in *Don't Lose Your Head* by attaching tickets to balloons and releasing them from her car as she drove down Piccadilly. It sounds silly now, but Wauna is such an enthusiastic soul that everyone, including the star and his family, spent the afternoon blowing up balloons."

Unfortunately, all the huffing and puffing that afternoon failed to inflate the box office sales; *Don't Lose Your Head* came to an early end. "A better title would have been *Don't Lose Your Shirt*," says Wauna, whose career as an impresario has caused her bank account to fluctuate from a low record of £3 to its present comfortable proportions. The Paul finances are now particularly healthy—the result of a new hit, *Murder Mistaken*, that has established Wauna as a successful West End manager. She is, incidentally, the only one who can claim to have been a professional wine taster, a tug-boat captain and the voice of Walt Disney's Three Little Pigs. "Nothing that Wauna might do would surprise me," says Jessie Royce Landis, the American star who was brought to London by Wauna. "If I heard she was opening a flying school or starting a night club I would be quite prepared to believe it."

In fact, Miss Paul did consider the night club business a few years ago, when an enterprising stranger almost sold her a club in Jamaica. Wauna had persuaded seven friends to put up £100 each to finance this venture when she discovered that a hurricane had passed by the club, pausing only to remove the roof. Wauna decided to stay in London, where hurricanes hardly ever happen.

In London, the only storms a theatrical manager fears are financial. Before the war, three out of every four plays produced in the West End were flops. Nowadays things are better: only half the shows lose money. This does not deter Wauna, whose recent record shows two losers more than balanced by two winners.

Relies On Her "Angels"

To produce a one-set play with a small cast costs a minimum of £4,000. Wauna obtains this money from three or four people rather than in one lump sum. "If you lose," she says, "it seems worse if all the money belongs to one man."

In the theatre, backers are called "angels"—a reference, Miss Paul believes, to the fact that they are few and far between. She offers them forty per cent of the profits but finds that few angels admit they are interested in making money. "Angels are amazing people," Wauna says. "Basically they don't like thinking of

Wauna Paul talks to producer John McCormack in Mayfair's Shepherd Market, where she lives

backing a show as a business proposition. They like to feel they are helping the arts."

On more than one occasion in Miss Paul's experience, "helping the arts" has meant a condition that the cast should include a would-be actress in whom the prospective backer has some interest. "Never again," Wauna declares. "Rich men never marry good actresses."

Currently, the Paul angels include the granddaughter of an Indian potentate, Princess Indira of Kapurthala. The princess is a B.B.C. parliamentary reporter and an avid reader of thrillers. She read the manuscript of *Murder Mistaken* and persuaded Wauna to produce it.

Jewels Had To Be Pawned

Obtaining an option is the first step in the production process. In the case of a drama called *Come Live With Me*, Wauna pawned her jewellery to buy the stage rights. The option on *Murder Mistaken* did not require the same sacrifice, and Wauna closed the bargain last May. She then tried to communicate her enthusiasm for the play to prospective backers.

"Trying to raise money is a painful process," Wauna says, "and I approached about fifty people to get the four or five angels I needed. Backing plays hasn't been an attractive way of losing money since the income-tax people ruled that only professional backers could deduct losses from their taxable earnings."

With the backers' money, Miss Paul opened a separate bank account for the play and began organizing production. The show went into rehearsal in September, by which time between £2,000 and £2,500 had been spent. Dates were aranged for a London theatre and for a short tour before going to the West End.

Brighton is still Wauna's favourite try-out town, although her first production—Somerset Maugham's *Larger Than Life*—almost came to a standstill there before opening. The star, Jessie Royce Landis, arrived in Brighton suffering from a double fracture of the foot. "Royce would scream with pain every time she put that foot to the ground," Wauna recalls, "We had to get her a wheelchair, crutches and an hotel room on the ground floor. Yet she insisted on going on stage. From the moment the curtain went up until it came down at the end of the play, she didn't even limp."

Wauna rushed her star to the London Clinic for consultations with two doctors. "Just tell me one thing," she demanded. "We know Miss Landis will be in pain. That's all right. But I wouldn't want to do her permanent injury." Normally, Miss Paul is a warm-hearted person. Her seeming callousness in this instance was probably the result of tension. With a show about to be seen for the first time, the theatrical manager is inclined to be nervous.

"Get-out" Is The Bogy

The crisis comes on opening night, when the venture is handed over to the mercy of the critics and ticket brokers. There is only one way to escape a loss at the box office, Wauna maintains. The magic formula is simply more money. "If you have enough capital to nurse your show for ten weeks," she declares, "it will run for a year, no matter how bad it is."

Stage finance is a comparatively simple sum based on the fact that London's smaller theatres can sell tickets worth up to £2,000 a week. The cost of running a one-set play with a small cast can be kept down to £1,200 a week. This sum is known as the "get-out" and it is the theatrical manager's aim to keep it as low as possible. The Paul budget usually includes a reserve to nurse the show for the first four weeks in case the ticket sales do not equal the "get-out."

Another hazard is the "stop figure," a device in the contract for renting the theatre. This clause permits either party to give notice if the box office receipts fall below an agreed figure—usually £1,000 to £1,200 a week. Miss Paul's first aim is to keep her show running for a minimum of three weeks, which entitles her to a share in the film and repertory rights.

When she made her plans for *Murder Mistaken*, Wauna was able to hire a theatre for a three-week period. She gambled on her belief that she had a success—and won. After enthusiastic notices from the critics, four theatres invited the Paul production to move on to their stages, and a New York producer flew the Atlantic to plan a Broadway version.

Murder Mistaken's début in London coincided with the opening of the Chicago production of *Gigi*, featuring Wauna's mother, Josephine Brown. Nearly forty years ago, as a rising young actress, Miss Brown was playing opposite the late John Barrymore when Wauna's imminent arrival forced her retirement from the stage. "Mother happened to be reading a book about Red Indians at the time," her daughter says, "and one of the characters was a Princess Wauna. I narrowly escaped being born in a dressing-room, but I didn't escape the name."

Trained As A Wine Taster

Wauna's childhood was divided between England, France, Portugal, Spain and Madeira. At nine, when she was staying in Guernsey with her stepfather's family, her step-grandfather, a connoisseur, decided to train Wauna as a wine taster. "I had a good palate at that age," Wauna recalls. "I hadn't taken up smoking, and I'd never touched spirits." The old man's course of instruction was so thorough that, years later, Wauna was able to get a job as head of the wine department of a San Francisco restaurant.

It was in San Francisco that Wauna came under the influence of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who was then touring in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Wauna asked for an audition and her transatlantic accent earned her the famous actress's compliment, "You're the only American who can speak the King's English." A commanding figure in a white lace négligé, Mrs. Campbell used to sit in bed drilling Wauna in stage technique. "I'm doing for you," she would say, "what Sarah Bernhardt did for me."

Wauna's accent also won her a job with Walt Disney, who put the versatile young woman to work as the French voice for the Three Little Pigs. "Fifty dollars a day," Wauna recalls, "and the hardest work I ever did." Her party accomplishments still include a piglet's piping version of *Who's Afraid Of The Big Bad Wolf?*

They Headed For Cover

From Hollywood, Wauna went to New York, where she appeared on the stage and in radio and television. She also became owner of a tugboat which she christened Anne Bonny, after the woman pirate. Georgia Burke, one of the stars of *Porgy And Bess*, remembers the Anne Bonny as the ugly duckling among a fleet of elegant yachts moored in Long Island Sound. "All those fancy yachtsmen would head for cover whenever Wauna got up steam," says Georgia.

Captain Paul resigned her command to join the Theatre Guild production of *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*, with Jessie Royce Landis and film star Charles Coburn. *The Merry Wives* tour cemented the Landis-Paul friendship and, in 1949, when the two actresses were looking for something to do—Wauna was in London and Royce in California—they hatched a plan for a West End production. The play, *Larger Than Life*, started Wauna on a West End career that has been anything but dull. According to stage manager Peter Green, there is only one hazard in working for Miss Paul. "Whenever Wauna says, 'I've just had a wonderful idea,'" he declares, "you have to stifle the impulse to run.

"But," he adds, "she has so many ideas that some are bound to be good." THE END

Broken crates slithered about the wrecked compartment. Trotter edged forward. At that moment, one of the monkeys leaped down on McGwiggan

WILD CARGO

by DUDLEY BARKER

The cyclone struck swiftly and suddenly. As the aircraft lurched, the cages burst open—and the screeching, scratching monkeys were upon them

TROTTER, AS FIRST OFFICER, supervised the loading of the monkeys into the aircraft. They were in slatted crates, addressed to a research department of the Ministry of Supply, London. They were shrieking and chattering, grasping with their hands at the slats, a look of anxiety in their wise, degenerate eyes.

"What do they want them all for?" he asked. Not that he cared—it was too hot to care about anything. Except to get home quickly, he thought, to Sheila. "Monkey glands, d'you reckon, or T.B. experiments or something?"

McGwiggan muttered and shook his head. Looked rather like a monkey himself, Trotter thought, with that grey hair and wrinkled face.

"Devilry," said McGwiggan, "that's what they want 'em for. Testing out their poison gases and their germs, in readiness for the next holocaust. Satan's work we're doing this trip."

"Aw, come off it," scoffed Trotter wearily. Mac irked him. He was tired of his reminiscences of the race of early flying heroes, and particularly of the gloomy cloak of religior he was preparing for his obsolescence. Meh should get out of the air when they're that old, particularly if they're half round the bend. After a few hours of Mac, Trotter pined for the young men with whom he had trained in the Air Force he had so reluctantly left. Still, he was lucky to have any sort of flying job, even with this charter outfit hawking its ropey old aeroplanes over the forgotten routes, hungry for any freight whatever.

With a glance at the loading plan, he busied himself directing the Negroes lifting the crated monkeys into the aircraft. The torrid air inside was fetid with the monkey smell.

When they were all in, he went forward. McGwiggan was fiddling with his radio panel, still muttering.

"So there's a curse on us, eh Mac?" he jibed. "When you've been flying long enough to

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ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT JOHNSTON

TAKE IT FROM ME (6) by JIMMY EDWARDS

I win a medal-and a Windmill début

F/Lt. Jimmy Edwards. He won his D.F.C. at Arnhem, where he was severely burnt as his plane crashed

In another exciting chapter from his life-story, Jimmy Edwards tells how he cheated death over the Arnhem battlefield, and lived to face another ordeal—the Windmill Theatre's "Dawn Patrol"

AS OUR DAKOTA plunged in flames to the ground, the Focke-Wulf which had attacked us as we flew away from the Arnhem battlefield soared up into the air again. Then, with a rending crash, we sliced our way through the trees and branches of a young forest below.

Somehow we hit the ground in a clearing, tipped forward until the tail was almost vertically in the air while I clung desperately to the edge of the escape hatch, and finally crashed down again and came to rest. With the last impact I was flung on to the roof, spun round like a top, and hurled to the ground just in front of the blazing starboard engine.

Some time during those terrible seconds I had been thrown through the flames, and now, as I picked myself up and ran from the fire, my face was scorched and tight and stinging. And even as I stumbled away, shouting and moaning with shock and fear, that devilish Focke-Wulf was doing a steep turn just above my head, looking to see who was escaping from the aircraft, which was now a mass of flames.

"Are you there, skipper?" a voice called. It was Billy Randall, my wireless operator.

"Bill!" I cried. "I thought you had baled out."

"No—couldn't get my harness on," he replied.

We half-crawled, half-ran towards some small trees as the German fighter returned to swoop in and strafe us. "Get down, Bill!" I shouted. We lay there with our yellow Mae Wests outlining us as easy targets among those tiny trees. Face downwards, I was literally trying to claw my way into the ground as we waited for his final cowardly attack. But we were in luck: we heard only three sharp cracks of his cannon—and he was out of ammunition. He passed impotently overhead and turned for Germany.

We ran to the shelter of the nearby forest, crawled among the trees and took stock of our situation. Bill and I were not alone. One of the army boys, who had travelled in the plane to help us to drop supplies to our paratroops at Arnhem, had survived with us, but his three comrades had perished in the flames. My second pilot and navigator had baled out and landed. We did not know where.

I have never been so badly shaken. My hands

"Professor" Jimmy and Windmill Theatre dancer Sylvia Dove, in his first professional stage appearance in May, 1946. "My first audiences," he says, "suffered me in comparative silence"

trembled, my teeth chattered, and I was almost completely incoherent. Billy had ricked his ankle as he jumped out; the soldier, a corporal, seemed to be suffering badly from shock and, Billy told me afterwards, had stood by the door of the aircraft with ashen face and staring eyes throughout the whole attack.

We did not know where we were or what our next move should be, but Billy and I fervently agreed that we had had enough and, if anybody turned up, we would surrender to them immediately. Remnants of lectures on escape came to my mind, and we frantically scrabbled in the soil with our hands to bury our Mae Wests, whose yellow colour could only attract attention. In the background, the black plume of smoke which rose over the remains of my Dakota, Treble 4, was occasionally illuminated by a red or green flare as our stock of Very cartridges went up. The petrol tanks exploded and we also heard the odd crack as loaded pistols and ammunition were engulfed in the fire.

We decided that somebody, possibly German soldiers, would be sure to investigate the crash, and that it would be best to move away as far as possible. But what direction to take? We had no idea—during the attack we might even have strayed across the border of Holland into Germany—but on my suggestion we began to crawl off towards the deeper part of the forest.

"Kamerad!" Cried Jimmy

At this moment we heard voices. They were speaking some foreign language which none of us understood. "This is it," I whispered to Billy. "I'm going to go out and give myself up." Accordingly, I crashed out of the wood with my hands above my head, crying out the only word that I could think of that might prevent myself being shot—"*Kamerad!*"

To my surprise, I was met by an old man in civilian clothes, with a small group of women and children behind him. What their impression must have been when this dishevelled, shouting maniac staggered out, goodness knows! I fumbled in my pocket and produced a slip of flimsy blue paper on which was printed a selection of useful sentences in all kinds of languages. These were supplied to air crew to help them out in this sort of trouble.

I turned hopefully to the Dutch page and indicated to the old man: "Where are the nearest British troops?" He did not seem to understand this; possibly he could not read. When I tried to speak the line he was even more puzzled. I tried him out on: "Where are the nearest German troops?" but this produced no effect. Then I decided to try the word "*Boche,*" thinking they might understand that. "*Boche, boche,*" I said. They understood at once. The women started nodding their heads and pointing at the man, saying: "*Ja, ja, boche.*"

Refuge In The Forest

I took it that this meant he was a German, and was about to draw my pistol—though heaven knows whether I would have had the courage to shoot him—when he restrained me and indicated that he would lead me back into the wood.

I called Billy and the corporal out of the wood and together we followed the old man along various tracks, farther and farther away from the smouldering wreckage of Treble 4. Before we left, he sent the women and children away, and now there were just the four of us, plodding through the forest. Eventually he hid us in a thick corner, among the trees, and indicated that we were not to move and that he would come back with food and drink. I was greatly worried by the left side of my face, which had been burnt in the crash, and he promised to bring something for that as well.

As night began to fall, the old man returned, bringing with him his wife. She had a basket, out of which she produced milk and some cold pork. After two cups of milk I found that I was so upset that I could not eat, and Billy felt the same. We lay low until well after dark, and then our guide led us another half-mile or so until we came across a house in a clearing. Here we found a collection of stalwart young Dutchmen, who were excitedly discussing the events at Arnhem. None of them spoke any English, but later on a priest arrived.

The priest could speak a little English, and we gathered that we were to be piloted through the wood—which was still in German hands, though not infested by them—until we reached another house that same night. From there we were to be taken next morning to the nearest British troops. This was cheering news, and at his suggestion we now parted with all our escape maps, pistols and ammunition, which, they said, they could use in their underground movement.

I was particularly happy when a short, fat, bald-headed man arrived with a little black bag. This was the doctor, who had come to give some attention to our wounds. Billy was limping badly and the corporal had caught a nasty nick in the back of his neck from a bullet. The doctor attended to us, spreading some soothing ointment on my face and binding the whole thing up with cotton wool and bandages. The Dutchman laughed at this, and I suppose I must have cut a very droll figure.

Weird Journey By Night

Eventually word went round that it was all right for us to go, and we were led into a high two-wheeled cart and set off down the ride cut in the forest. This was a weird and unreal journey, conducted in the pitch dark and through strange, forbidding scenery. It must have been a very big forest, because we never left it, though we seemed to travel for a long time. The surface of these rides was not prepared for driving, and we made ponderous and bumpy progress along them.

Other members of the party had set off on bicycles ahead of us, and from time to time we would come up to these shadowy figures as they stood at the side and signalled that all was clear ahead. The jogging motion of the cart soon had us feeling groggy, and we were very relieved when at last we pulled up outside another house and were hurried inside. Here there was an even larger gathering of men, seated round a table, and we joined them for a meal and an attempted conversation.

By this time, my face had begun to swell under the bandages. Though it was painful to me, it seemed to present to my hosts an even more amusing sight than before. Laughingly, they handed me a cracked old mirror so that I could look at myself. My lips had swollen and now stuck out grotesquely from behind my bandages. I had to force a wry laugh when I noticed, for the first time, that my much-prized moustache had fallen a victim to the flames.

Patriots Came Out To Cheer

We slept fitfully for a few hours and at dawn were awakened and escorted to a motor car, in which we were to finish our journey. It was an exhilarating ride. Our friends crowded into the car with us and others stood on the running-boards and hung on to the bonnet. The Dutch patriots had at last come out into the open and were bedecked with orange rosettes and other insignia. Most of them were brandishing pistols wildly. As we bowled along through tiny hamlets these orange-adorned patriots waved pistols and rifles, cheering in encouragement.

Then, all of a sudden, in the middle of a cross-road, there stood a British military policeman with smart white belt and gloves, calmly directing the traffic. What a welcome sight he was! We had now reached the Eindhoven-Nijmegen road, which had been held as a salient since the early days of the Arnhem show. The M.P., looking quizzically at my swollen face, dishevelled hair and burnt battledress, gave us a few directions to the nearest field-dressing station, which had been set up in a local school.

Here, with many cheery messages of good

Theatrical agent Jack Adams (left) helped Jimmy to start his career. He wisely advised him to open at the Windmill—a theatre which has produced many famous comedians

Clowning with Windmill showgirls in the theatre manager's plane. Windmill patrons preferred to goggle at the girls than laugh at comics, Jimmy found

luck, we left our Dutch friends and put ourselves in the hands of the harassed M.O. He stripped off my bandages and gave me a fresh dressing and a penicillin injection. Tying a yellow label giving details of my treatment on my battle-dress, he said: "You will have to be moved down the line as soon as possible."

We waited outside the school. A line of blood-spattered parachutes lying on the ground told the grim story of one of our crews who had baled out and been shot up by a German fighter as they floated down. The ambulance arrived and, climbing into it, we headed off down the road. At this time the battle was still raging at the top of the road and the enemy was on each side of it. Strict instructions had been given that traffic was to be one-way only—towards the fighting. Our driver, however, a very cheerful and forceful cockney, told us not to worry about this. "I'll get you through," he said. Every time we came face to face with a tank, or were shouted out of the way by some excited officer, he leaned out and bawled, "Serious burn cases, sir!"

Into Enemy Territory

This was the nearest I had ever been to the fighting, and as I looked out of the window of the ambulance, I was amazed at all the warlike scenes round me. This particular road had been cut by the Germans several times, I learned afterwards, and the situation was anything but safe. At one moment we came to a bridge, and as there was a bit of a hold-up, our reckless driver decided to turn right and find his way across the river elsewhere. After a mile or so it dawned on us that the road was unnaturally deserted. It was obvious that we were merrily careering off into enemy territory, but this did not seem to worry our driver at all. I persuaded him to turn back.

Somehow he got us down the road to Hertogenbosch and there delivered us to a more permanent R.A.F. hospital, which was made up of a series of tents and marquees. Here, the corporal was taken to an army hospital, and that was the last I ever saw of him. The M.O. looked at my label, gave me another injection or two, and put me to bed. I protested strongly that I had to get back to England as soon as possible, but I fancy I must have been in a state bordering on a complete collapse. At any rate, the doctor kept me there for three days before allowing me to go farther down the line.

Locals Mourned His Death

Billy Randall left me here and was sent on to Brussels. I gave him instructions to get in touch with the squadron as soon as possible to let them know I was still alive. Altogether I was about six days getting back to England, but by the time I reached my station at Down Ampney they had at last got word that I was safe.

I found out later that when the squadron got back on the day on which I was shot down, Major Joubert, my flight commander, had told them he had definitely seen me go down over the dropping zone. My mother had been notified officially that I was missing—she was also told, unofficially, that there was not much hope. Joubie swore he had seen a Dakota with yellow propeller bosses crashing into the ground, but, of course, there was more than one squadron involved in the operation and it must have been somebody else. Anyway, there was considerable gloom in Barnes, and I understand that drinking was suspended for a minute or so in our local pub, the Market Gardener, while they bemoaned my passing.

Back at Down Ampney, I was given the best of attention in the sick quarters and received visits from all my friends who came to congratulate me on my escape. But I was not the only one from the squadron who had run into difficulties. One of our pilots, F/Lt. "Lummie" Lord, had been badly shot-up over the dropping zone and had made a second run to finish his job with one engine on fire. He and all but one of his crew had perished in the subsequent explosion. Later, he was awarded a posthumous V.C. for his exploit.

I was whisked across to an R.A.F. hospital at Ely from Down Ampney in an ambulance with another officer who was suffering from burns to the hands. By this time I was a terrifying sight with my head encased in a small sack of lint, in which a thoughtful M.O. had cut two holes for my eyes and one each for the nose and mouth.

The ward at Ely was rather unusual, for the patients were from all ranks—the common denominator being a piece of burnt skin. My first morning there was a memorable one. The medical orderly announced with solemn emphasis that my ten-day growth of beard would have to come off. As my face was completely raw, with hair growing through the exposed flesh, I did not much relish the operation. I gritted my teeth as he hacked away with his safety razor, but could not stop myself protesting. After several new blades had been put in he managed to finish the job, and I sank back exhausted into the saline bath.

Daily Ordeal In The Bath

Daily bathing in saline solution was the basis of the treatment for burns in this ward—the idea was, of course, to try to cure the wound and leave as little trace as possible. Every day I went through the ritual of getting into a bath full of salt water while an orderly, hose in one hand and fine tweezers in the other, would attack my face. Directing a stream of salt water at the burn, he would scrape away with the tweezers to remove all traces of surplus tissue.

Though I had second-degree burns on my left ear, I suffered no great discomfort and was allowed to get up after about a month. But it was not to be all plain sailing. I was soon back in bed again with streptococcus infection in the ear. This was very painful, and at last the hospital surgeon was compelled to perform

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Fortune is a Woman

by WINSTON GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

I sat through that sickening inquest, hearing Sarah lie. My mind was made up. I was keeping out of this

AS I GROPED MY WAY through the pitch-dark house, I trod on something soft. I kicked it, thinking it was a piece of rubber. It didn't move. Then I shone my torch on it. My stomach turned over and my legs almost crumpled. It was a man's hand, and the man was dead.

My name is Oliver Brunwell. I check claims for insurance companies. But this check I was making was strictly unofficial. I suspected Tracey Moreton, the dead man, of being a fire-raiser and a fraud. I'd checked a previous claim of his some months before, and as a result he'd been paid for a valuable picture he had said was destroyed. . . . I'd seen the picture works later in a London flat.

I thought that the house, Lowis Manor, would be empty this weekend. Tracey and his wife, Sarah, were supposed to be away. So I'd driven down and broken in to see just how valuable his other "valuable pictures" really were.

It was, I know, a funny way of going about things, but this case was already growing complicated for me. I didn't want to make trouble for Tracey. I had fallen in love with his wife. . . .

I'd first met Sarah as a young girl before the

war. It was a shock to meet her again when I called on Tracey about his earlier claim. And in the months that followed we had become very close to each other. I even thought that she loved me.

That was a laugh! In the last few weeks I had to accept the cynical knowledge that she'd been using me. The allegedly ruined picture I'd seen in the London flat had been sold to the owner by a woman—a woman who answered Sarah's description. And that wasn't all. Looking back on those wonderful hours in her company, I remembered telling her once how professional arsonists worked . . . the candle in a bucket of wood shavings, timed to ignite when everyone was out of the building.

When I'd got over the shock of finding Tracey dead in the house—he seemed to have fallen from the landing while carrying a pile of curtains—I smelt smoke. I'd dropped my torch somewhere, and had to grope in the darkness. And then—I swear I heard it—I heard Tracey breathing.

You couldn't possibly mistake that asthmatic breathing. His asthma—partly inherited from his mother—had been particularly troublesome that season, and he had been taking treatment for it.

I called: "Tracey!"

No answer. How could there be an answer? Tracey was dead. I'd seen him.

I stumbled away, trying to trace the smoke. It was coming from down in the cellar. And there I found the evidence—the bucket of wood-shavings, the candle, exactly as I'd told Sarah. . . .

The fire had taken too strong a hold for me to be able to do anything. I groped about in a panic until I found the telephone, and then I rang for the fire brigade, giving Tracey's name.

I got out of the house quickly and made for my car. Already, I could hear the fire engine. I daren't risk being mixed up in this or involving Abercrombies, the firm I worked for. There was one nasty shock when a stranger stopped me on the road, and asked me what was wrong at the manor, but I managed to get away.

Half a mile up the road, I stopped. There was no need to ask what was wrong at the manor now. The clouds above the trees were tinged with yellow.

PART 3

The Inquest

SLEEP was impossible that night. As soon as I got back, I stripped off my clothes and climbed into a bath and lay there trying to relax, trying to get calm. I had a burn about eight inches long on my right forearm, but apart from that there was nothing to show. My eyelashes would soon grow again.

I lay there till the water began to get cold and then towelled myself down, put on clean linen and a dressing-gown. The burnt suit I wrapped in a brown paper parcel and put on top of the cupboard in my bedroom. The night air was chilly, and I lit the fire and chain-smoked till dawn.

The call was later coming than I expected. I'd made myself some tea and was trying to drink it when the phone bell began to trill.

"Oliver Branwell speaking."

"This is Michael, Oliver."—Michael Abercrombie, my partner—"Rather an early call for you, I'm afraid."

"Oh, what's up?"

"Rather a nasty shock for you, I think. It's Lowis Manor. The Moretons' place."

"What's wrong?"

"Practically burnt to the ground. At least that's what the police say, but they're always pessimistic. And there's another thing——"

"It's a good job the Moretons were away," I said. "Were the servants all right?"

"Oh, you knew that. . . . Well, I'm sorry to say it wasn't quite like that. Apparently the servants *were* away—but Moreton hadn't left. He'd been delayed over something, and it was he who gave the alarm. The brigade got there pretty quickly but—Moreton himself. . . ."

"Good God!" I said.

"Yes. . . . They found his body. I'm damned sorry. I know they're particular friends of yours. I think it's a good reason to go down pretty soon. I should——"

"I *can't*," I said. "I ricked my ankle last night. I haven't slept all night."

There was a pause. "Oh, hell," he said. "Bad luck. I suppose that means I must go. And I'd got a date for a foursome. I suppose I'd better go straight down. How do you get there?"

I told him.

"Is this thing likely to lay you up for a long time?"

"I'm not sure yet. The doctor said he'd know this morning. Will you ring me when you get back from Lowis? I'll be very anxious to have the news."

"All right, Oliver. I'll do that."

He rang off, and I put down the receiver, sweating.

What I didn't count on was Michael calling in to see me on his way home. It was after one when the bell rang. I dragged a chair across for my foot, slid off the slipper, and covered my foot with a towel.

"Come in! The door isn't locked."

Michael came in. "Oh, you are up. How does it feel?"

"Could be worse. Well?"

He took off his motoring gloves. "Not too good, old boy. The place is a ruin. They saved the oldest part, that stone-built hall with the barrel roof. Otherwise, it's gone."

"And Moreton?"

He sat down and shrugged. "Apparently he was caught in the house and fell trying to get out. His wife went up to Yorkshire in the morning and he said he'd follow later in the day. The police had just got her address from a servant when she phoned the police station to ask if they knew where her husband was."

"What time would that be?"

"What? I don't know. Early hours of the morning, I imagine. Why?"

"You saw her?"

"Yes." He wrinkled his eyebrows at me. "She was at the local pub at Sladen with her brother-in-law. She was pretty upset, of course. She asked where you were. The brother's Victor Moreton, the K.C. Didn't know that. He'd just been in and identified the body."

I said: "Was Mrs. Moreton there? Tracey's mother, I mean."

"I think she was just arriving as I left. There was another tallish chap there who seemed to be a friend of the family. Fresh complexion—rather bossy type."

"Fisher," I said, and a sharp stab of jealousy went through me. It was that, whether I liked it or not.

"There's no way of telling how the fire started," Michael said, swinging his gloves by the fingers. "I imagine it must have begun in the cellar from the way the whole centre of the place collapsed. Of course, I couldn't get near enough—the firemen were still working and there was a dangerous wall; but in a day or two. . . ."

"Thanks very much for calling in."

"It was almost on my way. I won't stop; I'd better push off." He slowly got up and looked around. "Are you sure you're going to be all right?"

"I shall manage all right, thanks. I'll ring you tomorrow."

THAT night I had a nightmare about Tracey. I woke up in a sweat, and the pain from the burn was throbbing. I switched on the light and lay staring up at it, trying to think.

Whatever happened about the insurance, I ought to go to the police about Tracey's death. What I'd thought was his breathing must have been the natural freak of the high wind; there could not have been anyone else alive in the house except me. But that did not in any way relieve me of the responsibility of letting them know that he had died long before the fire reached him.

All Monday I stayed in. The newspapers made as much of it as their space would let them. The inquest was Tuesday, but I phoned Michael in the morning, saying my ankle wasn't good enough. I kept hoping for a phone call, some

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Sarah answered in a low but perfectly clear voice. The coroner was very sympathetic. Then he asked her why she and Tracey hadn't left together that day. For the first time, she hesitated

Bargain hunting on the ocean veterans

by KEITH ELLIS

The ships that Thomas Gray handles are all "has beens"—only fit for breaking up. But there's still a fortune in every one

THE LETTER was like a hundred others. "Dear sir," it ran, "I hear the Empress of Australia is coming to you for breaking. Could you please send me a switch or push-button from the royal suite, which I once shared with my daughter?"

Thomas Gray sighed and told the office boy to place it in the file marked "souvenirs." A soft-spoken man in his early forties, with thinning hair and a disarming smile, Gray is commercial manager of T. W. Ward's shipbreaking depot on a backwater of the Firth of Forth at Inverkeithing, a few hundred yards from the north end of the Forth Bridge. "We sent her one," he says, "but whether it came from the royal suite . . . well!"

It was a busy time. Since the press had announced that the Empress was to be broken at Inverkeithing, Gray had been continually pestered by souvenir and bargain hunters. Every day, something like three dozen inquiries came by post. The telephone rarely stopped ringing. There were so many personal callers that Gray had to restrict the number on board to a maximum of a hundred at any one time. In three weeks he issued 1,500 embarkation permits. But all this was a diversion. "What we're really interested in is scrap production," he says.

His first-floor office overlooks the main yard, a large open space cluttered with scrap and scored by railway tracks. Everywhere, men are at work—sorting metals, dismantling machinery, cutting huge sheets of plating with spark-cascading burners. A mobile crane or a string of railway wagons rumbles past. Beyond rise the rusting hulls of the ships being broken.

Since it opened in 1922, about 170 ships have been broken at the Inverkeithing depot. They have ranged in size from the 56,000-ton Majestic (renamed Caledonia) to the Olympic (46,000 tons), the Homeric (36,000 tons) and right down to paddle-tugs and tank-landing craft. They have included destroyers, cargo-steamers and submarines. The biggest ships broken since the war have been the "battle-wagons" Rodney, Nelson, Revenge and Royal Sovereign, the former "Strength-through-joy" ship Robert Ley, and the converted trooper Empress of Australia. From the Empress, Gray hopes to recover about 17,000 tons of steel, a thousand tons of timber and five hundred tons of non-ferrous metals.

Gray (seated) discusses with Ronnie Smith the plan for breaking up the Empress of Australia

A "shopping" trip to the Llandovery Castle.

Scrapping Must Be Planned

The day after the Burntisland pilot brought in the Empress on a rising tide, Gray went aboard after the captain had given his farewell party and the pressmen, crew and public had dispersed. With him were Ronnie Smith, the tall, lanky assistant works manager, and Arthur James, the shipbreaking foreman, who was to be in charge. Between them, they planned roughly how the ship would be scrapped. First the superstructure was to be wiped off and then, to keep her back from breaking, she was to be dismantled fore and aft so that plenty of weight would be left in the centre.

"Every ship is stripped in much the same way," says Smith. First the woodwork is torn off and then the metal parts are dismantled. Usually, the plates are cut to the size of five feet by two feet in which they are sold. Even though every precaution is taken against accidents, shipbreaking is a dangerous business.

Gray tells how, some years ago, a man was working on a ship's side which was sloping away from him. He had burned right round a large piece of plating but, for some reason, it failed to fall. Foolishly, he walked round to the under-side to see what was wrong. At that moment, it fell—and crushed him to death.

Ronnie Smith himself had a narrow escape when he and Joseph James, brother of Arthur and now metal foreman, were unloading bottles from a lighter after working on the Caledonia, which was anchored in the Firth. "Bottle" is the name given to a gas cylinder; it stands about five feet high and weighs a hundredweight and a half. Smith and James were in the hold of the lighter as the bottles were swung ashore, ten at a time, in slings.

The ropes of one of the slings had not been properly adjusted. It slipped and the bottles started to fall. Ten feet below, Smith flung himself into a tiny, sheltered space in a corner of the hold. But there was no room for James. The bottles crashed down. Their heavy brass nozzles broke off and, driven by the pressure of the gas inside, whined and ricochetted about the hold like high-velocity shell fragments. Suddenly there was silence. Smith waited a few minutes, then crawled out. "Where's James?" shouted someone on the quay.

Quick Climb To Safety

Smith looked round. "If he's down here," he said, "he's under these bottles." At that moment James called out from overhead: "It's all right, I'm here." He had scrambled up the wooden framework that protects the metal side of the lighter and swung himself under the overhanging deck so that he was looking down at the hold. Later, they found some of the nozzles embedded in the ship's timbers. One had passed right through the three-inch bottom.

At all hours of the day, and sometimes even at night, Smith is to be seen hurrying about the

Gray fixes on-the-spot prices. The small boy is holding the ship's cat

Scrap metal is the biggest money maker. This scoop holds £500 worth

depot, cloth-capped, with a duffle-coat over his blue lounge suit. Occasionally, he skims down the Firth in a motor-boat to inspect a new arrival, or drives round to Ward's hired quarry to see that the rubbish is being dumped where it ought to be.

"Every ship presents a new problem," he says. The thirteen and a half inch armour plating of the Rodney and Nelson was too thick to be cut by hand. Instead, the burners were mounted on lathes. As the flame bit through, the operator turned a handle and the burner travelled slowly across the plate. The Z4, a salvaged German destroyer, was so drenched in oil that every time a burner touched her she burst into flames. "We just had to let her burn out," says Smith. Refrigerator ships also catch fire easily when sparks fall on the packing between the holds.

Although every ship arriving at Inverkeithing is checked by Customs officials, Gray's men occasionally find a bottle of whisky or packet of cigarettes tucked away in a ventilator shaft. They also find coins lost in hitherto inaccessible places. In the waterlogged Z4, which had been certified free of ammunition, they found five-inch shells, mortar and smoke bombs in the flooded ammunition lockers. In other depots, breakers have found opium and even bodies.

Since the war, the price of metal has doubled, trebled and quadrupled. A single ten-ton wagon of mixed metals may be worth £3,000. Often there is "rubbish" worth £100,000 lying in and around the metals shed. Brass is now so valuable that souvenir hunters who lightly ask Gray for a ship's bell are usually disappointed. "The cheapest costs over three pounds," he says, "and a big one, weighing, say, a hundredweight and a half, would cost fourteen." Ship's steering-wheels, which are also in great demand, cost about a pound per foot diameter.

Though nothing is charged for small souvenirs, Gray attempts to satisfy requests, if only for the gain in goodwill. A mother, whose daughter was born aboard the Empress after the evacuation of Singapore, was sent a plaque painted with a cherub. A large painting from the smoking-room went to the commanding officer of the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment, who had returned from Korea in the liner. A Maltese wanted a piece of teak for a paper-weight, someone else wanted a port-glass. Perhaps the most audacious request was from a woman who enclosed 2s. 6d. for a souvenir of the Rodney because "my son (six years) is called after it." Gray sent her a wooden fan.

Furniture At Cut Prices

Most requests for souvenirs from warships come from seamen who have sailed in them. One man asked for a "sextant, gauge, log-book, piece of china, dinner-gong or similar"; others want nuts, bolts and slivers of metal. Most of these requests, however, are referred to the firm's head office at Sheffield, where souvenirs like ashtrays, hand-bells and cigarette boxes are manufactured out of the ship's fabric.

More serious and more determined than the souvenir hunters are the people who want to buy furniture from the ship. Some are dealers, others are locals with a keen nose for a bargain. "Often they have no idea what they want," says Gray. "They go aboard for a look round." The buyer marks what he wants, and comes back later to dismantle it. It is priced by Gray as it is brought down the gangway. "I size up on the spot what it is worth," he says.

Early comers got some good bargains from the Empress. To one man, Gray sold a matching bathroom set of bath, lavatory and washbasin for £10. Between sixty and seventy mirrors fetched from five to thirty shillings—"and I know of one man who paid seventy-five shillings to have one re-silvered." Others bought washbasins at thirty-five shillings, baths at £3 to £4, and built-in wardrobes—with one or more sides missing—for thirty shillings.

After metal, timber is the largest single item. Much of it is smashed in the dismantling and is bought by a local firewood merchant at about £2 a ton. But fine timber now fetches up to £25 a ton. It has been put to all sorts of uses. The Woodside Arms Hotel at Aberdour, Perthshire, has a lounge lined with ship's panelling, and from the depot yard Arthur James can point out a row of houses and a chicken run that were built with wood from Ward's. He himself is using ship's timbers to build a week-end bungalow in the Perthshire beauty spot of Glendevon.

Like most of Ward's men, James sometimes buys furniture for his own home. Many years ago, he fancied a dressing-table inlaid with mother-of-pearl. He locked the cabin so that no one else would see it. Unfortunately, this so piqued the curiosity of visitors that they continually pressed the bell-button outside. The bell itself had been disconnected but, for some reason, the electricity had not. Eventually, wisps of smoke appeared under the door.

The cry of "Fire!" went up. The manager was called. "Break the door down," he ordered. Explains James sadly: "There were two doors, one on the port side, one to starboard. The door they broke down was just behind my dressing-table. They smashed it to smithereens." THE END

WE CHALLENGED THE WORLD'S CRUELLEST MOUNTAIN

Continued from page 9

should have waited for the sun to come up, but we were too impatient. Within seconds of coming out of the tent we were so cold that it was an effort to move. Our teeth chattered incessantly and our fingers were so stiff that we struggled stupidly to get into our skis and to rope up. Finally, after ploughing up the mountainside through deep snow for ten minutes, circulation slowly and violently tingled and burned back to normal. It was an unpleasant start.

For about four hundred yards beyond Camp One, Jim and I found the route quite easy. The slope was gentle and the surface unbroken. Had we not known differently, we might have thought, even at that short distance, that the icefall was equally innocuous, for the distances are very deceptive on those large Himalayan mountains. A blanket of snow can iron out the most turbulent glacier formation and foreshorten a mile-long snowfield to a hundred yards.

Desperately Hard Work

In addition to the danger from avalanches and the treacherously concealed crevasses, it is desperately hard work making a track, ploughing through knee-deep snow all day. A good track is vital. There are loads to carry up it, and without it there is the danger of getting lost between camps. Then there is the return journey. If the snow is well trodden it sets hard, and makes a safe, easy path; there is less chance of it being obliterated by windblown snow or a fresh fall.

For this laborious job, which was to take so much of our energies, we wore special half-length, double-width skis. They were more comfortable than snow-shoes, and in them we did not sink too deeply into the soft snow.

To combat the glare and the menace of sunburn and snow blindness, we wore plastic smoked goggles and hospital operating masks, though later I discarded my mask, as it was too much of a nuisance. Perhaps the greatest danger was frostbite. Acclimatization to high altitude depends on an increase in red blood corpuscles, and this increases the viscosity so that, if the veins contract through cold, the circulation is seriously impeded, and one is then very susceptible to cold. The daily temperatures were thirty to forty degrees of frost so that, even without this added effect, the danger of frostbite would have been present.

As we approached the icefall, the gradient steepened and cracks appeared in the snow. Our tracks began to writhe behind us as we avoided these crevasses and sought the best way into the fall. Jim or I—whoever was in the lead—trod more cautiously now and frequently tested the snow with the shaft of an ice axe. Before us the shattered glacier rose higher and higher, and soon our little tent on the snowfield below had disappeared from view. We were in a fantastic white wilderness.

Gigantic pinnacles of ice, a hundred and two hundred feet high, surrounded us. At every yard there was a crevasse, perhaps only a foot wide and six deep, perhaps thirty feet wide and a thousand deep. As the glacier was relentlessly forcing and tumbling its way down this steep slope between two walls of rock, tremendous forces were pushing and pulling, smashing and twisting the ice into a thousand shapes.

The crevasses zigzagged through this grotesque maze like a spider's web; and we were two tiny insects struggling to find a way through. We could rarely see more than fifty yards ahead, often not more than ten.

Time and again we came to an impassable crevasse and had to retrace our steps or make a detour to find a snow bridge over it which was strong enough to bear us. Then, while the rear man stood firm and held the rope taut round his waist, the leader cautiously went across, prodding the snow in front with his axe, ready for the first sign of crumbling. Once across, he stood firm while the rear man followed, with equal care, in his ski-prints.

On some of the more steep or icy parts, we took off the skis and cut steps. For the man in front, working with the axe, it was interesting; for the man at the back it was a little cold.

Technical difficulties apart, we were becoming increasingly concerned about the thickness of the soft surface snow. With the skis on we were sinking in to our waists, and we realized that it was these skis that made the going possible at all. Even so, it was terribly slow. Occasionally, an ice pinnacle collapsed and toppled over with a crash into the depths. The sun was out briefly during the day, and overhanging snow began to thaw.

In these conditions our prospects began to look dismal. We were not yet feeling the effects of the rarefied atmosphere, but a few thousand feet higher we would be pausing for breath between steps. Would we be able to progress in the deep snow at a rate sufficient to keep us from freezing in our tracks?

Privately, I had been worried ever since we left camp because my feet stubbornly refused to warm up. The cause was not so much the cold as the tightness of my boots. These had been specially made in England and sent on to Pakistan, but as we preferred to walk in strong plimsolls below the snow-line, we had been wearing boots for only a few days. They were broken in by now, but mine were still proving painfully tight with two pairs of socks.

By the middle of the afternoon we had taken the tracks about 1,200 feet above Camp One, nearly a thousand of which were in the icefall. That was fair progress, and both of us were happy with the day's work. We skied out of the icefall down the last gentle two hundred feet and saw the second tent alongside ours. "Bill and Tenzing had better have some tea ready," Jim yelled across to me. But when we came to a standstill, Bill poked his head out of the tent and said: "Hallo, boys. I've some bad news for you. Tenzing won't come with us. He, too, thinks it is too cold."

Worst Night So Far

If the earlier withdrawal of the three Sherpas had dampened our spirits, this completely dashed them. But still the three of us did not consider turning back, although we could not help thinking of the weakness of the party. It would mean more relaying of loads, less rest and, if one of us was hurt, or fell ill, it would be more difficult to get him down off the mountain. But, perhaps most important, we would be without the advice and experience of Tenzing.

That night was the worst so far. When we took off our boots, our socks were encrusted with ice. My feet had turned purple and they were numb for six hours. Bill helped me to massage them, but it was not until I had settled down to sleep that they started burning back to life.

We were all a little on edge and, while we were preparing the evening meal, one of the Primus stoves started playing tricks. Suddenly a great sheet of flame filled the air, singeing our faces. It was fortunate that snow was heaped around the tent and that it was iced over, or we might have been left sitting among the charred embers silently surveying the prospects of a chilly night.

After supper we settled down to write letters. They were not ordinary letters: they were to be delivered only if we did not return.

NEXT WEEK: The final, disastrous stages—and I come back alone

DOWN YOUR GARDEN

with RICHARD DIMBLEBY

Dibber with a gauge

To ensure that bulbs and small plants are always planted at the correct depth, I have drilled holes in my garden dibber. I insert a piece of wooden pin in the hole which will give the required depth, and push the dibber into the soil until the pin touches the ground.—ROBERT R. ROWELL, Leazes, Burnopfield, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Sunbath for potatoes

Some varieties of seed potato become seriously affected with dry rot during winter storage. I prevent this by leaving the tubers lying in full sunshine for several weeks, if possible in a cold frame or under cloches, until they are thoroughly "greened" right through. —D. SUTHERLAND, Wick, Scotland.

A seed in every dimple

Papier mâché egg trays, obtained free from the grocer, make a useful substitute for seed boxes. I sift potting mixture on to the tray, smooth it over and drop a seed in each "dimple." The trays can easily be moved on a board, and when the seedlings are ready for potting on, I just cut between each row. Then I set out each seedling (still in its papier mâché container) without disturbing the roots. Eventually the papier mâché rots away.—A. COOK, Isleworth, Middlesex.

Readers are invited to send their own simple, original gardening hints to DOWN YOUR GARDEN, John Bull, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Every week, Richard Dimbleby will make a selection of the best, and John Bull will pay three guineas for each on publication. "Down Your Garden" hints cannot be returned unless they are accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

FORTUNE IS A WOMAN

Continued from page 19

word from her. But it didn't come.

I'd never been to an inquest, and I didn't want to go to this one; but as the time came near I got more and more restless.

An hour before I knew he was due to start, I phoned Michael and said: "I've just seen the doctor, and he thinks I'll come to no harm. If you called for me I could come along and drop in at the inquest while you were actually going over the ground."

"Good," he said. "I'll be round about a quarter to eleven."

I went out and bought myself a stick, and when Michael arrived I was ready with a tied-up ankle and a slipper.

He dropped me off at the village schoolroom about ten minutes before the inquest was due to open. There were a few sightseers and a fair number who were waiting patiently on the back benches; but I squeezed in among them on the very back bench.

Victor Moreton, looking very proper in a black coat and striped trousers, came in with his mother. She looked pretty well all in. She walked as if she'd suddenly become ten years older. Then Clive Fisher came in with his sister. Following them was Sarah with a limping, elderly, thin-faced man.

She was in grey, with a black hat and black gloves. Black didn't suit her the way colours did, but that didn't seem to matter. I was still hopelessly attracted by her.

It wasn't until they had sat down that I realized the man with her was probably her father.

Then the coroner came in and things began.

Victor Moreton gave evidence of identification. He got a great deal of deference. The coroner was a fat man who blew through his fists and kept clasping them as if he were going to pray. After Victor, a fireman described the call coming through and said they were only twelve minutes from getting the call to reaching the manor; but by that time all the centre of the house was ablaze. He told how they broke in the window of the hall and put in hosepipes and how they saw the body of Mr. Moreton lying among the flames. They were only just able to drag him out before part of the roof collapsed.

A POLICE sergeant went into the stand and said much the same thing in different words; then the pathologist from the local hospital was called. He said that he had examined the body at 1 a.m. on Sunday, and he estimated that the deceased had then been dead three or four hours. There were very extensive burns, but these had occurred after death. Cause of death was a ragged split in the scalp two to three inches long. In answer to the coroner, he said it was the sort of injury which would be sustained by falling backwards upon the head.

The coroner clasped his hands for a minute and said: "Could these injuries be attributable to any other cause?"

"It's never possible to be absolutely certain. But to me they very strongly suggest a fall—especially as one elbow is badly bruised and there is also a bruise on the hip. If, as I understand, the floor of the hall where he was found was a polished one with rugs, it is reasonable to suppose that he may have jumped from the gallery, landed on his heels on a mat, and the mat slipped from under him."

The coroner blew on his knuckles and thought it out. "Does anyone else wish to question the witness?"

There was a minute's fidgeting. Victor Moreton got up.

"I think you said, Doctor, that the burns all took place after death?"

"That is so. There would have been an inflammatory reaction if he had been alive at the time."

"D'you think it likely that he may

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Foolish Heart

"MY HUSBAND WORKS NEAR HOME and I've met lots of his office friends. But he never mentioned the lovely girl I'd seen him talking to in the street. *I worried!*

"Then he 'phoned asking if he could bring to dinner his assistant Tom and Tom's fiancée. They'd come straight in — would I have everything ready? So I added Batchelors wonderful Cream of Tomato soup and Batchelors lovely peas to the menu. I know how to make a 'pot-luck' meal popular.

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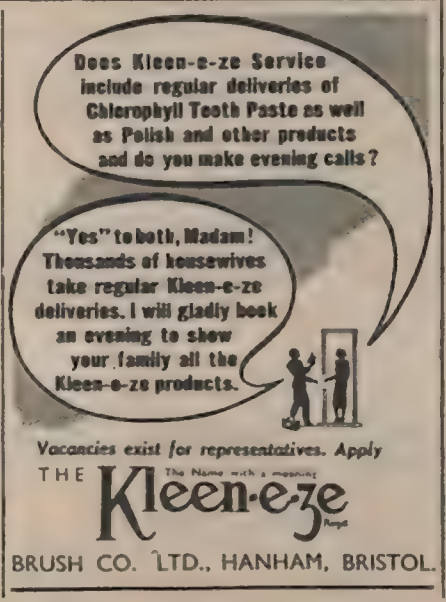
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have *fallen*, not jumped, from the gallery, having been overcome by smoke?"

"No. There was only about one per cent of carbon monoxide in his blood. If he had been overcome by smoke, there would have been a great deal more than that."

"But the heat alone, I suppose, might have overcome him—rising through the centre of the house, and my brother not being in normal health?"

"Yes, he might have fainted. It's not impossible."

The pathologist went, and then I saw Sarah get up and go into the witness box.

I got the usual silly reaction, as if I'd got thrombosis or something. You could see when she stood there how taut she was. The coroner was very sympathetic.

She said, in a low but perfectly clear voice: "My husband has been an asthmatic since the war, and is very susceptible to dust, and we decided to go away for a week until the workmen had finished. As our two servants hadn't had a holiday for some time, we thought we should release them, too. I left for Yorkshire on Saturday morning and my husband said he would follow by car later in the day. When he didn't come I began to get worried and tried to telephone him. There was no reply, so after waiting some time I phoned the police station, and they told me. . . ."

The coroner said: "Did your husband have an attack of asthma on the Saturday before you left?"

"He doesn't—didn't—often have *attacks* of asthma, because he had things he could take to ward them off. But he was always more or less asthmatic in a chronic way, and had difficulty with his breathing; and this had been getting worse for two or three days before Saturday."

"What was the purpose of your going on before him on the Saturday?"

She hesitated for the first time. "He thought . . . he's been having injections from a specialist in Harley Street—and he thought if he could get an extra one in that afternoon it might put him right for the week's holiday."

"Can you think of any reason why, in fact, he didn't go up to London but stayed on in the house?"

"I'm afraid I can't—unless he was ill. . . . We were expecting him in Scarborough about nine."

"I see. Thank you very much. I think that will be all, Mrs. Moreton."

As she came down from the stand, I knew her answer about the specialist was a lie—as if she'd shouted it.

It was raining when we drove back. Michael said: "What was the verdict?"

"Oh, what you'd expect; death from misadventure."

"Anything special emerge?"

"No. Nobody seems to know if he fell or jumped."

"Did you see any of the Moretons afterwards?"

"Not to speak to."

We drove on for a bit.

Michael said: "The loss isn't quite so total as I thought. Part of the kitchens were saved by the wind. You could make a small house of the kitchens if they were restored."

"What about the contents of the house?"

"Everything of value is gone. A few sticks of furniture, nothing more. I think in your report you should say——"

"Look, Michael," I said. "I'd like this to be your report. D'you mind?"

Michael looked at me.

I said: "You've done the work so far. And in a way it's better that you should go on with it. I've been friendly with them and I wouldn't want anyone to think the report was unduly favourable to them."

"Damn it, they're not claiming for a new hearthrug on the strength of a cigarette burn. The damage isn't exactly unapparent. But I should have said *our* report, meaning, of course, the firm's report. It doesn't matter two pins who draws it up."

Now was the time to say: "Look, Michael, I've something to say to you." By shamming ill, I'd got away from the responsibility of a snap decision. But there was no excuse for any more delay.

But Sarah might still make some move. . . . Even though she'd lied today. And lied to me. . . .

I said: "I wonder what they'll do now?"

"Who? The Mrs. Moretons? Pay through the nose for a villa in Tunbridge Wells, I suppose. It's not much fun being deprived of your home these days."

"I suppose it all goes to his wife," I said.

Michael frowned at a motor car which was misbehaving itself in front. "No, in this case the house was entailed—by the father. In his will he left it to Tracey in trust for his children; failing issue, to his younger son Victor. The insurance will go to the trustees, who will invest it and pay the interest to Victor."

"You mean Tracey couldn't have sold the house if he'd wanted to?"

"No, he couldn't have sold it. Of course, the insurance on the contents will be the wife's absolutely; in this case much the larger part of the settlement."

We drove on without speaking. After a long time, as if he'd been thinking about it, Michael said: "Anyway, I shouldn't think young Mrs. Moreton will stay a widow for long."

"What makes you think that?"

He looked a bit surprised at my tone.

"That's unless she chooses to. I mean. I don't know if Moreton was a wealthy man, but he must have been comfortably off. What with her looks and a tidy fortune. . . ."

"Yes, I expect you're right," I agreed, feeling the pain in me like a knife.

That evening I wrote a letter to Tracey's mother. I wrote to her because I could do it honestly: everything I said to her I meant. A couple of days later the reply came, thanking me.

That was on a Friday. I remember the day, because there was a dinner that night I had to attend. The thing was held at a Park Lane hotel, and the Abercrombies had taken a table for twelve, our guests being two brokers and an underwriter and their wives and the general manager of an insurance company. The idea was that each firm of adjusters made up a table and invited their best clients as guests.

Charles Robinson, my chief friend among the underwriters, was at our table, and Fred McDonald was one of the brokers. I could have done without seeing McDonald for a few weeks; he was the broker insuring Lowis Manor.

McDonald was sitting at the other end of the table from me, and we hadn't exchanged more than a word; but after the speeches he came across

Allergy—the mystery complaint

"It was a sunny afternoon. The girl lying in the grass beside me was tantalizingly close. As I summoned up courage to kiss her—I sneezed!"

The writer, Don Everitt, is one of five million in Britain who suffer from hay fever and other serious forms of allergy.

One man gets a rash when he wears silk. A woman has hay fever when she powders her baby. Others are allergic to milk, fur, lipstick, nylon, cats.

The full implication of the condition—and its effect on such complaints as sinusitis—is only now being realized. What Don Everitt learned when his own case was treated is told in a fascinating article . . .

in John Bull next week

and said: "Been doing any more crystal-gazing lately?"

"Why?" I said. "D'you want six away winners?"

McDonald turned to Charles Robinson, beside me, and said quietly: "The dear boy came into my office a week ago and asked me how much Lowis Manor was insured for. A couple of days later it's burned to the ground. Can you wonder at my question?"

"That's not crystal-gazing," said Charles. "It sounds more like fire-raising."

"Yes," I said. "You wouldn't begrudge me turning a dishonest penny, would you?"

"I wouldn't begrudge it if you told me how you did it," said McDonald.

"There you are," Charles said to me, "it *is* those six away winners he's interested in!"

On Charles's part, of course, it was all light and good-humoured and didn't mean a thing. But there'd been a taint of spite in McDonald's voice.

Dancing followed; but I made the excuse of my ankle and left early. I slept heavily, and when I woke there was an envelope on the mat. I knew that this was it. I read it slowly.

Dear Oliver: Tracey's mother has shown me the letter you wrote her. It is kind of you to think of her at this time. I saw you at the inquest, but wonder you did not come to speak to us afterwards. Victor is being wonderful about it all, but your help and company would not be unwelcome when you have time or inclination to give it.

I hope your ankle is better.

Sarah.

I read it half a dozen times. To my eyes it was the letter of a guilty woman, inviting me down to make use of me.

Well, I wasn't going. I didn't reply. I didn't go down to the funeral.

DAYS, weeks passed. The claims for the house and its contents were settled. I went about my ordinary work and insisted that Michael should deal with them himself. I worked remorselessly, senselessly, at all hours, wanting to keep myself occupied, with no time for my own thoughts.

Then, one weekend towards the end of summer, I happened to meet John Graves, who had been in my battalion. We had a few drinks, talking about old times, and then he said:

"By the way, Oliver, I believe you know Sarah Moreton, don't you? I met her last week at a party and your name came up. What an attractive creature she is!"

"Oh," I said. "Yes, she is."

"She was with a bloke called Fisher, who does murals and things; engaged to him, I heard someone say. Don't know if it's true. . . ."

After that, I was more restless than I'd ever been in the past—and miserable as well, now. The friends I'd made in this new life were only friendly acquaintances. The only friends I'd ever really made—or *thought* I'd made—had just been using my friendship for their own ends.

It was Saturday afternoon, but I went back to the office and worked until five.

London was dead that afternoon when I got home. George Street was empty, and almost the only car on the left hand side was parked a few yards beyond the entrance to my flat.

I didn't suppose it was anyone for me, and drew up behind it. I thought I'd go in for a smoke before I put the car away. I went in and up the first flight, and saw a woman coming down. It was Sarah.

She said: "Oliver, I. . . ."

I went up the next three steps so that I was only one below her. She hadn't changed. Except that she was so much more lovely than my dead memory of her. She was wearing a light flowered summery frock and no hat, and a wide silver bracelet on her wrist, and flat-heeled sandals of green linen.

MY mouth had gone so dry I couldn't say a thing. I went past her and threw open the door and then stood aside for her. She stood in the middle of the room, waiting for me to speak, slightly hostile.

I said: "Won't you sit down? It isn't Lowis Manor, but the chairs are clean."

"Thanks."

I felt in my pocket, but the cigarette packet was empty.

I said: "You're living in London now?"

"Yes. With my father."

She was sitting in one of the easy chairs, and the sun caught a corner of her hair, making all the darkness into copper. She said: "You never came to see me. Never once."

"Did you expect me to?"

"Was it expecting too much of you? I'm sorry." Contempt was in her voice.

"Yes, it was expecting too much."

"I don't understand. I thought. . . ." She stopped there. We were both trying to control ourselves.

"Yes, tell me," I said furiously. "Tell me just what you did think. I'd like to know."

Her eyes were startled out of their own hostility. She said: "When Tracey died—the way he did, when that happened, all my friends were so kind and understanding, and tried to help me with their friendship . . . all except one. And I'd thought—expected—I'd expected. . . ." She stopped and took a careful breath, avoiding my eyes now, struggling to get this out, what she'd come to say. "It's

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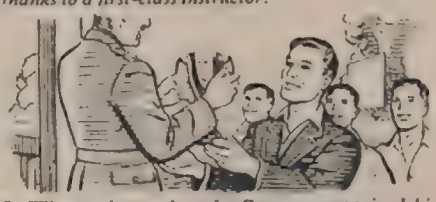
'There's no doubt about it!'

Says Staff Sergeant R. H. Dandie, B.E.M., R.A.S.C.

STAFF SERGEANT DANDIE was 17 when he joined the Territorial Heavy Ack-Ack in 1939. After an exciting war career including helping to repel V1 attacks on Antwerp and organising air transport in Tripoli, he was demobilised and became an insurance Agent. Bored with the routine of civil life and missing the comradeship of the Army he rejoined as a Private. In 1947 he took an air transport course and was promoted to Sergeant *nine months after re-enlisting*. For his service in the Berlin airlift he was awarded the B.E.M. Now he trains officers and men in Air Dispatch. At 30 he is married with two sons, lives in a modern Army house at Shrivenham and receives pay and allowances of £11.12.0 per week. He is able to save £2 per week. Captain of his Company cricket team, and studying to become a Warrant Officer, and a Probation Officer when he returns to civilian life, he says sincerely, "there is no doubt about it—the Regular Army today is a great life and offers a fine career".

1. *As the planes roared away to isolated Berlin's Tempelhof, Sgt. Dandie and his 30 men at Wunsdorf Airfield knew that they were doing a vital job to help beat the blockade . . . his B.E.M. followed.*

2. *Sgt. Dandie puts two of his instruction class—willing Lieutenants both—through the tricky exercise of parachuting an aircraft load. They learn quickly—thanks to a first-class instructor.*



3. *What a day—when the Sergeant captained his Company cricket team to win the Salisbury Plain District Cup. He said that the team did it all—but his skilful leadership certainly helped!*

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nearly four months and you never even wrote. I tried not to come here this afternoon, I thought, if that's the way he feels. . . . But I came because I had to. I had to make sure. I thought perhaps some sort of scruple, some feeling that you would be out of place, that——"

"Scruple is the word," I said.

"What is it? If you feel as you do—apparently, for some reason. . . ."

"Oh, what's the use?" I said wearily. "That sort of blue-eyed innocence doesn't ring the bell any more."

She was staring at me. After a minute she said: "Go on. Don't stop there."

"What do you want me to say? What is there to say? That I've felt too *sick* about it all—sick to the stomach—to bother to see you or to be able to write. I found out the truth—quite by accident—just a few days before the fire. I went down to Lowis Manor, was there at the time of the fire, saw it all. I don't know what went wrong—something did—in a way just as much for you as for Tracey. But it didn't stop you from cashing in on the fraud right to the limit. Did it? Well, I kept my mouth shut. What more was there you could have expected me to do?"

She got up. The colour had gone from her hair and from her face; she was like someone suddenly seen in black and white.

"Oliver, *what* are you saying?"

I couldn't stop now. "That Foster that was supposed to have been burnt in the first fire. The man who bought it from you didn't take it out of the country after all. It's still hanging in his flat in Maida Vale. I saw it there and asked him about it. He described you and the story you'd told him. So I went down to Lowis Manor on the Saturday evening to see the other fakes for myself—and found the fire had just been started."

I stopped there for a second, for breath. Her throat moved. Then she turned so quickly that her skirt swung in a fan.

I was just at the door in time to get in her way.

"You've got to listen to me now."

"I'll *not* listen!"

"You've no choice. . . . To begin with, I hoped—I tried to believe—that you were only in it as an unwilling partner, playing Tracey's hand because you were his wife. Then you said nothing, did nothing, played the innocent victim. . . . It was no good any longer. I'd been made a fool of by you both. There was no excuse for fooling myself."

"Please get out of my way!"

"Will you deny that you sold the Foster to an American called Croft in the first place—pretending it had been lost in the fire?"

"Deny?" she said. "Of course I deny it! I've never *heard* of a man called Croft. Our Foster was burnt. You've got fraud on the brain. And as for this—this later story—it passes belief. If you think you've been withholding something for my sake, *please* don't withhold it any longer. Go to the police. Do what you like to smirch Tracey's memory. It's good enough to stand a few cheap smears!"

She pushed past me and out. There was a patter of footsteps and then they were gone. The slam of a car door, the revving of an engine; then I chased down the stairs after her. By the time I came out, the car was turning into Baker Street.

ABOUT half past four, I went to see Bill Croft, the American. "Is it something about the picture?" he said. "I thought, the first time you came, that it upset you."

"It's not about the picture, but about the person who sold you the picture. You told me, didn't you, that she was about thirty, tallish and dark and pretty?"

"Yes. Sure. That's the lady."

"With her hair curly, with a touch of bronze in it—her skin very clear . . . a—a quick-moving, vital sort of person; her eyes crinkle when she smiles and her brows straighten; her nose is straight and slim and fairly short; she sometimes catches up her lower lip with her teeth."

He looked at me, quizzically. "Yes, I guess you might say that's fairly accurate."

"I don't mean *fairly* accurate. Does it describe her so there'd be no mistake?"

"Well, I couldn't say that. I only met her twice for two short interviews in a shop. And that's two years ago."

I fumbled in my pocket and took out a clipping from a newspaper; it was a report of the inquest with a picture of Sarah. "Was she like this?"

He took it, frowned at it and carried it nearer the light. Then he handed it back.

"No. She'd got more prominent cheekbones, the girl I met. Different shape of face. But I'll grant you she's rather like her."

When I got home, I took down the telephone directory. There were two Darnleys with a G. among their initials, but there was no mention of either being a doctor. But one lived in Leytonstone and the other at 21 Ponting Street, S.W.7. The one at Ponting Street sounded much the more likely.

I went out to the car again, and drove there.

A short-haired fellow in a dark suit opened the door. I asked if this was Dr. Darnley's house. He said it was.

"Is Mrs. Moreton at home, please?"

"I'll inquire," he said, and went off. He came back to say she wasn't.

"When do you expect her?"

"I expect it'll be late tonight. Usually is, sir."

I went down the steps and sat in the car. I looked up at the house, but there was no sign of life about it. Nor was there any sign of Sarah's car. I drove off along the main road till I found a shop that was open and sold cigarettes; then I came back. I stopped near the end of Ponting Street. It was just seven o'clock.

HALF an hour later, the manservant came out and stood on the steps and hailed a passing taxi. I got out and walked down.

After a minute or two, the servant came out again, but with him, leaning on his arm, was Dr. Darnley, Sarah's father. He seemed to have a good deal of difficulty in getting into the taxi, and I thought, he's changed, too, since that night. I glanced up at the house and saw a hand let a curtain fall.

At a quarter to eight I rang the doorbell again. I had to ring three times before it opened.

The same manservant said: "Sorry, Mrs. Moreton's phoned to say she won't be home tonight."

I put my foot in the door.

"Here," he said. "What do you think——"

I went in and he backed and sat down on a tiger rug in the middle of the narrow hall. He tried to grab me as I went past, but I got to the stairs and ran up them three at a time. I'd tried to work out where the hand was and I worked it out right. There were three doors and the extreme right one led into a bedroom. Sarah was sitting at a dressing table brushing her hair.

She dropped the brush and stood up, pulling her yellow housecoat round her. Trixie began to bark from a corner.

"Matthews——"

I put my foot against the door. "If that's Matthews downstairs, tell him to lay off till I've finished. I must talk to you, Sarah."

She said furiously: "Get out of my room! How dare you force your way in here!"

I said: "I've been to see Croft. I took along a photo of you out of one of the papers. The girl who sold him the Foster wasn't you, although she was like you — closely enough for the mistake. But it *was* a mistake—so humiliatingly bad—so unspeakable. . . . There's nothing you can say bad enough, nothing I don't want to add to——"

Somebody knocked on the door and tried the handle.

"He's in here, Matthews!"

Matthews threw his weight against

"Do I still love you? First, you tell me what you're leading up to"

the door. It creaked and gave at the top, but my foot held firm.

"Listen, Sarah," I said desperately. "I mean to talk to you if I have to take this house to pieces brick by brick. So call him off and give me a chance to work this out."

"It's *worked* out," she said. "Finished. Done. I've nothing more to say to you—ever."

I put my weight against the door. Trixie had come out of her box and was sniffing at me in a friendly fashion. "I've made one terrible mistake. But they can't *all* be mistakes, all the things that prove the fraud. Croft's picture *is* the genuine Foster. He's had it verified twice. Foster's 'Mill And Spinney,' painted from just below that copse where we sat. The thing that was burned was a fake.

"I don't know if the first fire was a put-up job, but the second was. I was *there*, Sarah. I was there within a few minutes of it starting. The whole thing was planned. The paraffin — the candles — the shavings. . . . Tracey never jumped to save himself from the fire. He was dead before it got going. I found him in the hall.

"He didn't phone the police. *I* phoned the police after I'd tried to put out the fire. I've still got the scar of a burn on my arm. When the fire brigade came, I slipped away, because I thought you were in it with him. I was too knocked over to do what I should have done. . . ."

Sarah said: "Stop. Wait a minute. Stop. . . ."

I waited. She went back slowly to the dressing-table and sat down.

I said: "But now . . . I'll never get straight with myself for thinking what I did about you."

"How d'you know you're completely wrong?"

"By your look. And because . . . well, I do."

There was the sound of double footsteps on the stairs. With a knock, the door opened, and Matthews came in with a policeman behind him.

"Here he is."

I still wasn't sure how I stood, didn't know what she would do. The policeman glanced from one to the other, as if he wasn't sure himself.

"Did this man break in here, miss?"

Sarah got up. "I apologize, officer. I'm afraid I don't need you after all. I'm sorry, Matthews; you were quite right to go. It was—a misunderstanding."

Matthews's face was expressive. "Well, ma'am, you did call. You did say——"

"I know," she said. "I'm very sorry. Mr. Branwell will be leaving in a few minutes."

"In that case," said the policeman, looking sourly at Matthews, "there's not much for me to do, is there, eh? I'll be getting back."

He turned and went out, and Matthews, with an angry shrug, did the same.

I looked at Sarah. "Is there somewhere else we can talk?"

She turned away from me, fumbling in her pocket. "I've got to have *time*, Oliver. I'm supposed to be going out tonight. I was due at eight. I—don't feel. . . ."

"Put it off. Come out with me. We can eat somewhere quietly, talk about it quietly. There's so much that *I* want to know, too."

She said, doubtfully: "All right. Give me a few minutes. I'll change and come down."

We were sitting in one of those little foreign restaurants that abound in London.

"I've hardly seen the money yet," she said. "Victor has handled everything. I was surprised at the size of the insurance settlement—but it was a pleasant surprise, nothing more. Tracey had only a small insurance on his life —the company wouldn't increase it after the war. It didn't occur to me to query anything — Tracey always looked after the business side of things. Would it have occurred to you?"

"Eat your dinner," I said gently.

"No. I want you to know all about it. How could you start thinking those things about me? What *have* you been suspecting?"

"Well, there was the way the fire was prepared. I'd explained that to you only the week before."

"Oh, but I knew about that before you told me. It was in a magazine last year some time—about the fire-raisers before the war. Tracey probably read it, too."

The waiter came and served us with slivers of *filet mignon*.

I said: "And then at the inquest you said you left that morning for Yorkshire by yourself because Tracey wanted another injection. Knowing about the injections, I didn't believe it."

"Well, I had to say something. I couldn't very well tell them what had really happened. . . . It was very unusual for us to quarrel. But we did that morning. I left Lowis not quite knowing—or caring—what Tracey intended to do. I was boiling, but when I got up to Yorkshire it all cooled off and I tried to phone him. I didn't

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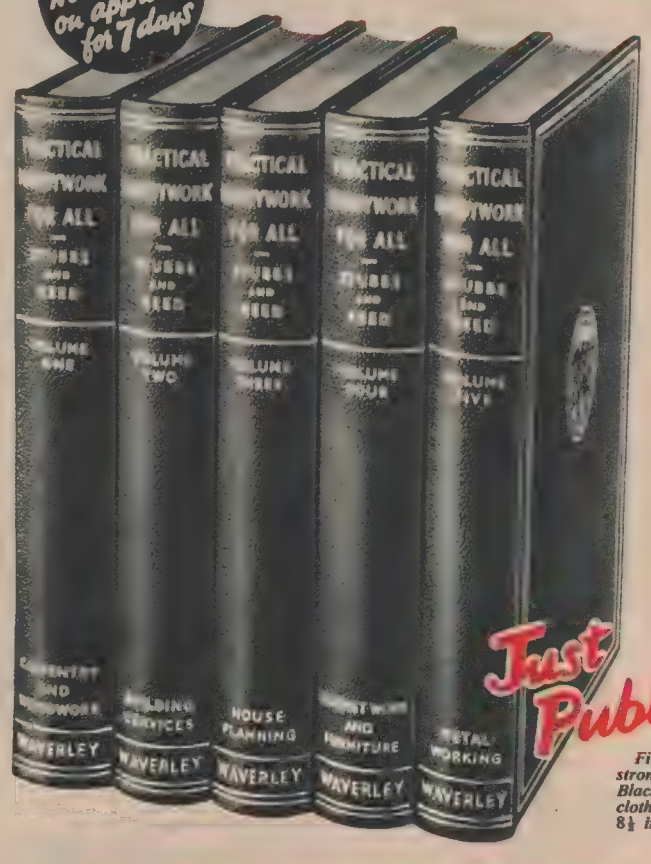

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want to explain that at the inquest."

I nodded but said nothing.

"But didn't you say there were things I'd said and done—other things? I want you to tell me, Oliver."

"Well, you said—when I asked why you came out with me, knowing how I felt—you said there were reasons."

Her eyes flickered up to mine for a second and then went coolly past me. "There *were* reasons. They were not those reasons."

Silence fell for a minute or two.

I said: "Do you see much of Clive Fisher these days?"

"Not a lot."

"I heard—you know how these rumours get about—that you were engaged."

Her lips moved. "No."

"Is it likely to be true?" I asked.

"No."

On the way home, we stopped for a few minutes on the Embankment, watching the dark river. We were silent and after a while she shivered.

"If you're cold I'll——"

"No. . . . It isn't that. I've been thinking. . . . There's no proof, Oliver, is there; no absolute proof at all that Tracey set fire to the house?"

"For that matter," I said, "we can't be positive that he fell from the gallery."

She shivered again. "It never has made sense to me."

I started up the engine and drove her slowly home.

As we drew up outside the house, she said: "What can I do with this money? I can't touch it now."

"Have you spent much of it?"

"No. It's only just come to me. In any case, Tracey left about four thousand in cash. I suppose it was money from selling the pictures. . . . Then there were a few small investments. Can the insurance be paid back?"

"I imagine so, somehow. Let's see. Berkeley Reckitt were the underwriters—a fellow called McDonald. I don't know exactly how it will work out; but if you'd like me to, I'll put in a few inquiries to see if it can be done without publicity. There's no point in blackening Tracey's name unnecessarily."

"Of course not. Besides, there's his mother. It would kill her if it ever came out." She paused. "But what will happen to the insurance on the house? That isn't mine to return."

"Oh, that's a fair settlement. In any case, I think I'm right in saying that the money legally belongs to the trustees, and no insurance company could claim it back. The trustees didn't fire the place."

She fumbled with the door handle, and I got out and opened it for her. I said: "D'you think you can overlook all the shabby suspicions that have been festering inside me for four months?"

"Oh. . . . Yes. Were they shabby? If I'd been in your position. . . ."

"Will you meet me tomorrow evening, then?"

She stood a minute on the pavement, looking up at the stars.

"Yes," she said.

Next morning I phoned Henry Dane, the blunt but canny solicitor whom I knew to be the best man to discuss the business of the insurance with. I fixed to go and see him on the following Monday. I didn't know then that I wouldn't be able to keep the appointment.

In the evening I called for Sarah; and on the Tuesday it was the same, and on the Wednesday we had dinner at one of the big hotels and danced afterwards.

As we danced, she said: "I thought you *didn't* spend your time socially."

"What? Oh, no, I don't normally."

"Nor do I—I haven't for seven years. I used to like it."

"Used to?"

"Yes. Don't encourage me. It could get out of hand. Sublimation of my old love for ballet. . . ."

"Good. Let's help each other."

"How?"

"Well. . . . Sublimation of my old love for Sarah."

She didn't answer that. She was quite tall beside me. A maroon frock with a Medici collar. One pearl earring. Some women—a few women—when they're dancing seem to have a waist and no feet, a balance and no weight, so that a pleasant sensation gets above itself and becomes an art, a form of sophisticated experience. She was one of them, and I told her so.

She flushed suddenly and smiled. "Thank you. That was a nice thing to say. I could say nice things about you, too, but you're so prickly. It would embarrass me to say them."

As we left the floor and sat down I said: "There's one thing . . . you said I was prickly. I know that. There's a reason. The chief thing that's been wrong these last few years is that I've been in love with a woman who is—and always has been—out of my reach."

There was silence for a bit.

She said: "You think that's the chief thing wrong?"

"I'm sure it is. But of course I don't ask you to believe it."

"Perhaps you ought to. Perhaps it would be a worse thing if I was lacking in faith too."

My pulses began to beat. I said: "Darling Sarah, I don't know what you mean by that, but it seems an oncoming sort of remark."

She struck a match from the box in the middle of the table and watched the flame.

"Does it?"

"It's one that could be pretty easily mistaken by anyone with any belief in himself at all."

"D'you think," she said, "that anyone with any belief in himself at all would be *likely* to mistake it?"

The match went out. She looked up and met my look. And I knew then that she wasn't out of my reach any more.

I PAID the bill somehow, and we got out of the hotel. We'd come by taxi, and the commissionaire got one for us. As soon as he'd shut the door, before the driver had flicked down his flag, I said: "Will you marry me?"

"Yes, Oliver."

"When?"

She hesitated. "When you say."

I couldn't believe it. "You mean that, Sarah?"

". . . Yes. If you want me to."

"Tomorrow? Saturday?"

The driver pushed open the partition. "Did you say twenty-one or thirty-one Ponting Street?"

"Either," I said. "Take your choice."

He shut the window, muttering, and the taxi lurched out into the traffic.

I didn't try to touch her. Her voice had been queer, uncertain. After a bit I said: "Saturday?"

"What—in three days?"

"Could you face it? Before anyone has time for wise advice or—or good intentions. A very quick matter-of-fact thing at a register office, and then

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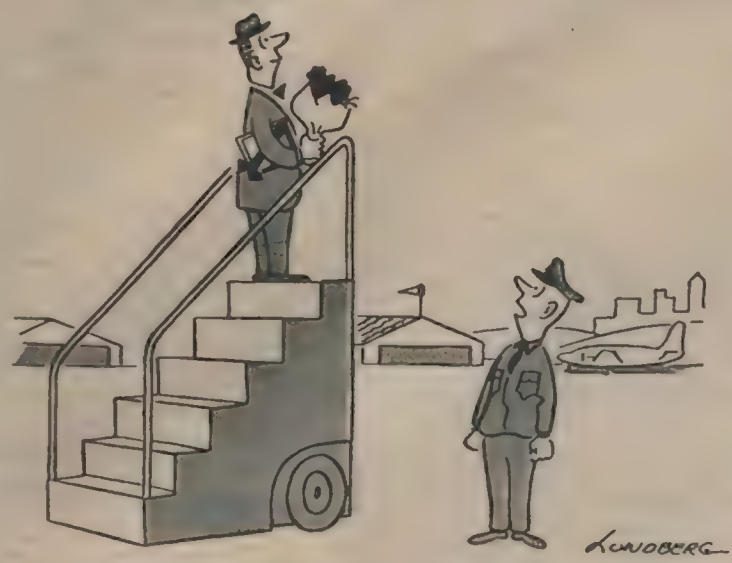
by ROFFE THOMPSON



"Do relax, sir. We'll let you know as soon as it's in sight"

Paris or Rome or somewhere, by air—so that there's the absolute minimum of fuss. . . . I'm not afraid for myself, but I am for you. If you let the light of too many cold mornings——"

"Please," she said softly. "I *want* you to believe this. It won't make the slightest difference."

"Oh, yes, I'll try. But I know it's harder for you. I've no ties—or people to mourn—or anyone's feelings to consider. You've got your father and Mrs. Moreton."

"She always liked you—I don't think she would be upset after a time. But she'd think it far too soon. She . . . and Victor. . . ."

"We've lost ten years already."

There wasn't anything more said until the taxi-driver, guessing right, drew up at No. 21. I got out and began to pay him. Sarah looked at me but didn't say anything. As we went up the steps and she took out her key, I said: "When I come, can I bring the air tickets for Saturday?"

She said: "Sometimes you frighten me, Oliver. There's no let-up, is there? There's been no let-up since Sunday afternoon."

"Sorry. I'm sorry."

"No, it isn't that. But in some ways we're so much alike. Isn't that a risk? I'm trying to think for two."

When she got her mouth free, I spoke just ahead of her. "Saturday?"

"It's impossible. Crazy——"

"Saturday?" I kissed her again.

She said: "Oh, darling, don't. . . ." in such a drowning sort of voice that I stopped.

We clung to each other then in the darkness for a minute or two while I waited for her decision.

I had no scruples now about rushing her. The decision was Yes.

THE plane taxied along the runway and took off lumpishly into the wind. The blessed relief; we were off, off. Whatever happened now, the thing was done. I looked down at the small knot of figures. Michael, Sarah's father, a few friends.

Neither Mrs. Moreton nor Victor had turned up. Mrs. Moreton was in the Isle of Wight, and Victor had been leaving for Scotland on the night train on Friday; Sarah had phoned him, and he had been quite nice about it.

I glanced at her sitting beside me. She had asked to have the gangway seat because she didn't like looking down. There was a lot we should have to talk about, but not just now. The old existence was still too near to start making arrangements for a new one.

Very late that night, as we lay together in the dark, listening to the thinning traffic of the rue de Rivoli, I looked out at the night sky and thought with astonishment: this is peace. For the first time in my life I was at peace. It was not a heady, intoxicating sensation; it was calm and joyous.

We had eight days, really. Eight days until the thing came. I'd never known Sarah until that week. Falling in love with someone, the way I had with her, is like seeing two or three colours and thinking you see the whole spectrum. I hadn't realized before—though I should have—how highly strung she was, how her vitality burned itself out at times, yet never left her empty and depressed. I hadn't realized what fun there was in her, or how she could flare up in a sudden anger that never lasted. I hadn't known how easy she was to please, or how hard to impress, or how sweet she could be in the most improbable and enchanting ways.

We didn't do many of the obvious things. Of course we went to the ballet. I could see more in it now, and I would have gone in any case to see her pleasure. We tried a play or two, but I couldn't follow them, and some of the night clubs. We dined at the most expensive restaurants and the cheapest. We shopped in the rue du Faubourg St. Honoré and in the boulevard de Clichy. We walked for miles, along the banks of the Seine, west to the Etoile, east to Notre Dame and Ile St. Louis, where the fishermen sit all day.

Above all, we talked. I never knew there were so many subjects in the world, or any of such passionate interest. We talked and argued and settled the world's problems and faced our own, made plans and then threw them over for something better. And often and often there was laughter—which had been so absent from her during the week in London. It sparkled and bubbled in her until I felt that perhaps she really was almost as happy as she seemed.

The eighth morning we got up and had our breakfast at the table by the window as usual, because of the wonderful view. The Hôtel Continentale overlooks the Tuileries, and from it you can see nearly all the beauty of Paris.

I was lazily finishing my coffee when the post came. There were two letters for Sarah and she read the first, from her father, with her bare elbows on the table. As her hair was quite loose it kept falling forward, and she'd push it back with a slow movement of her fingers. I got something out of seeing her just do that. Then she looked up and met my look and smiled with her eyes. I got up and went over to her chair.

She put a knife through the flap of the second envelope.

"Doesn't seem to be any letter in it," she said. "But there is something. Very exciting! Wedding present, I believe."

She unwrapped a bit of tissue paper and a ring fell out and rolled across the table. It rolled half way across to me and then fell on its side.

I had no difficulty in recognizing it as Tracey's signet ring.

To be continued next week

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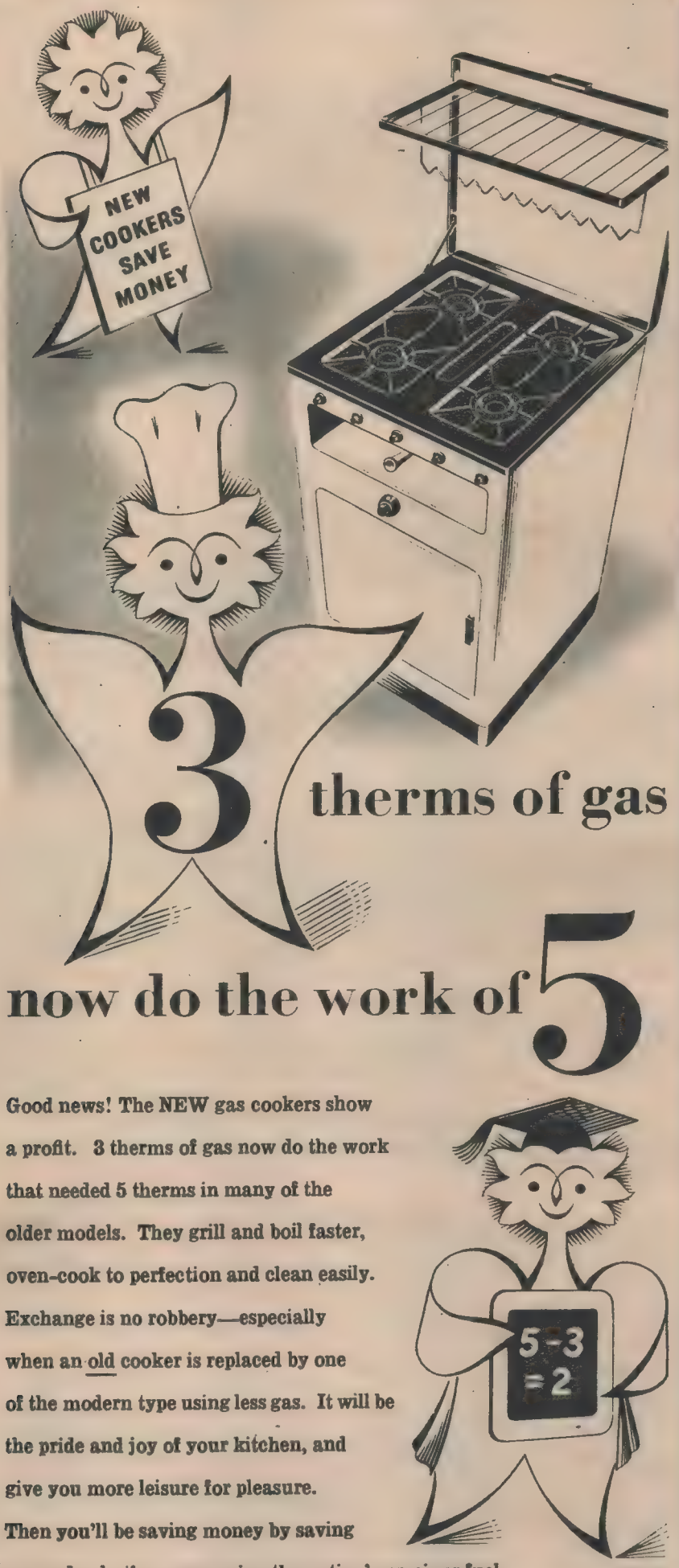

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SLEEPY DEATH AT HOLLINGARTH

Continued from page 11

finished his talk, and he grinned at me and said: "Ah, you're from Iredale, eh? Fun and games going on there, I hear."

I glanced at him sideways. He laughed. "Gossip spreads fast, you know. I've been in Greyhaven some while, on methane production. Local news gets about. I've been told of a feud between two of your chaps, and poisoned rams."

An account of yesterday's episode, I knew, would reach him soon. Trust our bush telegraphy. So I told him the rest of the story.

"Funny thing is," I ended, "the doctor insists it was a minor blow. He can't make out why Albert was in such a bad way, and he said he had the appearance of a man who had been nearly asphyxiated."

Perry stood there looking at me, and he was silent and concentrated so long, I wondered what had come over him. Suddenly he grabbed my arm.

"Here, I want to see this intake. My God! If it is—— Do me a favour. Come along with me to the Main Colliery. I've got a temporary office there, with a library of maps showing all the old workings. Come on!"

He became more excited still after inspecting the maps, and asked to go to Barr's intake right away.

"On the way out of town," he said, "I'll buy a few squibs. Sure to be a shop that stocks fireworks."

"Squibs! What for?"

"You'll see," he said.

He bought the squibs, and we drove to Iredale. It was a grey, quiet, windless afternoon, with darker cloud well above the highest tops. The fells had the colour of unpolished gunmetal. We left our cars in the dale road near Hollingarth and walked up to the intake. Perry stopped by the gate.

"If I'm right," he said, "we'll soon prove it. Conditions are ideal. With any wind about, or rain, it would be much more difficult to test. Now, stay where you are."

He lit a squib, and tossed it well out into the small, walled field. I gasped to see a burst of flame flicker along the ground.

"What on earth——?"

He said: "That's it. On earth. But under the earth to start with. A century since there was a mine here. Probably they filled in the shaft with proper care and attention. Think of that filling as a stopper. And after all those years the stopper has been loosened. A week or two ago there were abnormal rains. That might have done it."

Marvelling, I said: "What is it that's actually burning?"

"Methane. A gas common to coal mines. We've had a few cases of this kind. People in a row of houses in a northern town made a complaint to the gas company about leakage. They examined the main and found nothing wrong. Eventually I discovered the houses had been put up over an old shaft, and methane was seeping out."

I said: "In a spot like this——"

"Last thing you'd dream of, eh? Mind you, the weather would be the controlling factor. On a breezy day the dispersal would be immediate. On a windless day dispersal would be slow, with a strong concentration near ground level."

"Yesterday there wasn't a breath."

"That accounts for Barr. If you hadn't moved him when you did, he'd have soon passed out. I expect it was quiet and still on the night he lost his rams. They'd have been grazing with their muzzles down and inhaling the methane wholesale." He shook a deedy head. "I'll have to see that the Board get on with this job immediately."

I looked down at Hollingarth, and then towards Tom Miller's farm.

"Before you do that, Dr. Perry, you must come along and see a very sad girl and an even sadder young man. We must tell them that they can go on loving one another after all."

THE END

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

I HAD a splendid grandmother, a gracious old lady who lived in London and paid me the first compliment I ever received.

When my sister Margaret was born, Grandmamma did not deign to pay a visit of inspection to our home in Wiltshire. But when news reached her that my parents had produced a son and heir she set out at once to examine this phenomenon at close quarters.

She arrived unheralded in the nursery just after my sister had been placed in her cot and I was being lifted from my bath.

As she gazed down at us both, the old lady snapped enigmatically: "The girl's all right, but the boy's naked."

At the age of three, I temporarily punctured an inflated reputation for languor by racing a couple of greyhounds and pipping them at the post. I escaped from my nurse and opened the iron grille of a kennel in which these dogs were kept. They bounded out and rushed towards me, their jaws wide apart, their fierce little eyes viewing me hungrily.

With only a few yards start I headed for the gate, and managed to rush through and close it just as the angry beasts came within nipping distance of my posterior. The adventure has left me with a permanent aversion to dogs.

School memories are nearly all painful. I was sent to several educational establishments, and spent most of my time thinking up reasons why I should leave. Presumably the headmasters were mentally on my wavelength concerning this question, and so masters and pupil would part company with mutual relief.

When I passed from my private school into my public school, the prep. school master—who, I imagine, had abandoned all hope that I should pass any examinations—gave the entire school a half-holiday.

The final stage of my pursuit of knowledge was reached when I went to be coached for the diplomatic service, a singularly unlikely choice of career for one whose tongue does not easily adapt itself to the language of diplomacy.

Instead of going on with this, I went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and have been milling about the theatre ever since.

Today he is well known as a comedy and character actor. For his name, see page 35

TAKE IT FROM ME

Continued from page 17

a small operation on the ear. After that it quickly healed up.

For Christmas, 1944, I was allowed home on leave from the hospital. I still had my head in a bandage, but the wound was nearly healed. This short spell at home was made additionally happy by the arrival of a telegram from W/Cdr. Booth: CONGRATULATIONS ON AWARD OF D.F.C.

I danced with glee and wired back: THANKS FOR PERFECT CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I was doubly proud of this decoration because so few D.F.C.'s were awarded in Transport Command.

My return to full flying duties was gradual. At first I spent a few months tootling round England with the squadron Oxford, taking people to and from leave. Then, when I had grown re-accustomed to the Dakota, I at last found myself conveying passengers and supplies to the Continent.

At about the time Germany surrendered, our sister squadron on the aerodrome, No. 48, received orders to proceed at once to the Far East. It was at their farewell party in the mess that I met Miranda Dulley, the sister of one of my fellow officers. "What do you do for a living?" I asked her, making conversation.

"I'm on the B.B.C. North American service," she said. "I produce quarter-of-an-hour talks on the war—one of them a day."

"One a day! Don't you find it hard to keep up the supply?"

"Sometimes," she said.

"Perhaps I'd better do one for you on Arnhem," I grinned. I was teasing, of course, and had no idea she would take me seriously.

"I'll take you up on that," she said. "Send me a script as soon as you can."

I wrote a script, called it "Treble-Four—The Glider Tug", and Miranda and I recorded it at the B.B.C. studios in Oxford Street. The disc was sent to Canada, and later reproduced in the Home Service. It was my first experience with the B.B.C. Encouraged by this I did some other work for her, and under the name of Michael O'Neill I conducted a quiz programme beamed direct to Canada.

That summer of 1945 I was posted to 24 Squadron, arriving there on the day Japan surrendered. This was a V.I.P. squadron, but I, with my battered cap and sloppy tunic, was not suited to the job.

Round The Bend

As it turned out, my stay there was short-lived. On New Year's Eve, I went for one of the periodical medical examinations which had been made necessary by my prang. I went in there with no thought of a change in my medical category. I felt as fit as usual, but simply had an accumulated hangover from several days of Christmas festivity.

I found myself having a long conversation with a psychiatrist, who seemed to find me a very interesting case. As a matter of fact, he did most of the talking; all I seemed to do was answer all his questions in the affirmative. Before long, I realized that he thought I must be slightly round the bend. To my great surprise, I came out to find that I had been grounded as unfit to fly anywhere. Really, I think that psychiatrist ought to have had his head examined!

Anyway, I was grounded and posted away from 24 Squadron very soon afterwards. Just three weeks later my demob number came up, and I was in civilian clothes once more.

People often ask me how I came to be in what all show people know as "The Business." It would be nice to say that I achieved this by hard work and determination, but I cannot even pretend it was a lifelong ambition. I must admit that I got there by luck, coupled with my natural laziness and inclination to drift. I was greatly helped by the "I'm-willing-to-have-a bash-at-anything" attitude I had picked up in the R.A.F.

When my demobilization loomed near—but not until then—I was forced to think of how I was going to make a living in civvy street. I tried to narrow down the various professions for which I was suited and ended up with three: farmer, schoolmaster—or comedian.

I had worked on farms during my holidays as a boy. I had taught in school for a few months to earn extra money. I had developed my trombone act in the R.A.F. at amateur concerts and shows. However, farming needed capital—all I had was my £98 gratuity—and I had already proved a failure at teaching. This narrowed down the field to show business, but I did not know how or where to begin. What worried me most was that I had no idea if I was good enough to be a professional stage comedian.

While still with 24 Squadron, I received encouragement in an unexpected way. A concert party was planned for Christmas, 1945, by the station personnel at Hendon, and I was asked to do my trombone act. I came on in my usual tail coat and baggy trousers nipped in at the ankles with bicycle clips, carrying a large trombone case. When I opened the case and took out a tin whistle, the audience roared with laughter. In fact, the whole act went down very well; but then, it always had done with Service audiences.

Praised By Critic

However, in the mess, after the show, I was introduced to Alan Dent, the dramatic critic of the *News Chronicle*. He shook my hand warmly. "That was a first-class performance, Edwards," he said. "Very funny."

Next morning, in his paper, he reviewed the show—an extraordinary thing for him to have done with an ordinary Service production of this kind. "In the matter of particular competence," Dent wrote, "perhaps I should encourage only Jimmy Edwards, gloriously funny and majestically cool with a trombone."

I read it with great excitement. Maybe I really ought to go into show business, I thought. But I was not yet sure. A few days later, I chanced to meet Dent in a West End pub. "Remember me, Mr. Dent?" I asked, brashly. He smiled. "Certainly. You're the man with the trombone."

Between drinks I tried to pump him. "Do you really think I am good enough to make a go of it in show business?"

"Ah, I'm not going to commit myself on that," he said. "I'm not going to advise you to chuck everything else and then perhaps take the blame if you fail." Then he added: "I do know that I enjoyed your act the other night." That was enough for me.

At that time my particular stage idol was Sid Field, whom I regarded as the funniest man alive. Whenever I was in town I went to see him, to roar with laughter, and to admire his inimitable comic technique in *Strike It Again* at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

Chat With Sid Field

One evening, seeing the show for the fifteenth time, I nipped out to the bar during a period when I knew Field was not on the stage. There, having a quiet drink, was Sid himself. He seemed almost gloomy.

"Hallo," I said.

He brightened up at once. "Hallo yourself," he said. I found out later that he liked having people around him and, in fact, he probably had more friends than anyone else in show business. We had a short chat and he told me that he lived quite close to me on Barnes Common.

Of course, I did my part to keep up this treasured acquaintance and met him whenever possible in the Railway Hotel, near Roehampton Lane. There I persuaded the proprietor to introduce me to Sid's agent, Len Barry.

I told Barry that I wanted to get

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PRACTICAL RESULTS

Student 171/162.—I have sold my story to **EVERYWOMAN** for 25 guineas. *Student* 1106/156.—The **B.B.C.** accepted the script for the Light Programme—the 9 guineas—after my first lesson! *Student* 141/76.—The article which I wrote for the Second Test Paper appeared in the **SUNDAY MAIL**. Thanks for the recommendation. *Student* 2317/185.—I am pleased to say that my article for Lesson Two has been accepted by the magazine **TRAVEL**. *Student* 2003/1610.—The Course has already borne fruit, for I have sold an article to **PSYCHOLOGY** for 2 guineas. *Student* 1834/152.—. . . together with cheque, which I obtained from the **CHRISTIAN HERALD** for the article which I originally wrote for the Second Test Paper. *Student* 761/2812.—I have just sold my first story to **FAMILY STAR** for 4 guineas, and am I thrilled! *Student* 473/28.—I have had my first short story accepted by the Editor of **HOME REVIEW**. *Student* 1437/217.—. . . on your advice I sent my article with a covering letter to the **LIVERPOOL ECHO** and barely three weeks had elapsed before I had the pleasure of seeing it in print. *Student* 1328/2110.—**GLAMOUR** have paid me 7 guineas for a short story and the **B.B.C.** has accepted a fairy story, to be adapted for the Children's Hour. *Student* 984/227.—I also have to report the sale of a further fairy story to the Co-operative Press, for inclusion in their **SUNSHINE ANNUAL**, payment 2 guineas. *Student* 1518/69.—**MODERN WOMAN** have paid 5 guineas on acceptance of my article. *Student* 181/282.—You may be interested to hear that yesterday I had a letter from the Editor of the **ARGOSY**—they have offered me 25 guineas for my story. *Student* 3577/3015.—I have had my story accepted by **BLACKWOODS**, who are paying me £25 for it; also one or two others, at smaller rates of course, for service magazines. *Student* 120/28/8.—I have established contact with the Editor of **PUNCH**. The item was accepted for Charivaria and is a good start. *Student* 591/28/7.—I am sure you will be pleased to know that my article submitted for my Second Lesson was published in the **DAILY MIRROR** and I received 6 guineas for same. *Student* 848/129.—I hope you will be as pleased as I am that my article, submitted for Test Paper Two, has been sold, on your advice, to **MEN ONLY**. *Student* 1954/157.—I have just corrected a proof of my story for **WIDE WORLD**—they have since accepted another and I have sent in a third. *Student* 778/2119.—I thought it might interest you to know that **THE COUNTRYMAN** has accepted a short article of mine on an old country custom. *Student* 820/1310.—I had 7 guineas for my story, which appeared in **WOMAN'S COMPANION**; I also had an article published recently in **FARMER AND STOCK-BREEDER**. *Student* 4135/7150.—I have sold an article to the **COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH**—they are sending me a cheque for 5 guineas. *Student* 184/315.—As you suggested, I submitted the article to the **NEW STATESMAN**. One was published on July 17. *Student* 1404/6/5/49.—I am pleased to tell you that the article which I wrote for Test Paper Two and submitted on your recommendation, to **CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER**, was accepted. *Student* 988/2225.—The magazine which accepted my story was **RED STAR WEEKLY**—they paid me 4 guineas. *Student* 1173/58.—The article has been accepted by **LONDON OPINION**, having earned 4 guineas. *Student* 1813/173.—My story was published in the June issue of **ARGOSY** and I have just had a letter from the Editor offering me 8 guineas for a second one. *Student* 187/43.—I have sold my first short story prepared for Lesson Eight, to **HOME NOTES** for 12 guineas. *Student* 1905/1387.—I have had an article, about 2,000 words, published by the **WEST SUSSEX GAZETTE**. . . . . .

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into show business, and added that I was going to appear at the Stage Door Canteen, in Piccadilly, on the following Tuesday in a show for the troops. "All I want to know is whether or not I've a chance to make money as a professional comic," I said. "If I haven't I'll try something else."

"I'll send someone to have a look at you," Barry promised. He was as good as his word. After the show I was approached by a heavily built middle-aged man. "I'm Jack Adams," he said. "Len Barry asked me to come and see you. Ring in the morning." He slipped his card into my hand, but before I could ask him what he had thought of my act, he was gone.

A Special Audition

Next morning, in a fever of excitement, I telephoned him. He asked me to come to his office in Golden Square, and I hurried there. "Well?" I demanded, impatient to know the best—or the worst.

He shrugged his shoulders. "You are obviously an educated man," he said. "Are you sure you want to come into this business?" I did not know; I wanted encouragement. "I don't promise anything," Jack Adams said. "It's very difficult to book unknowns, but I might be able to get you an audition at the Windmill—Van Damm is always willing to give newcomers a trial."

Two days later, Jack phoned me. "Van Damm has agreed to give you a special audition tomorrow," he said to my delight. The time of decision had come.

The audition was held in the rehearsal room of the Windmill Theatre. Van Damm, the theatre manager, a short, stocky, grey-haired man of about sixty, smoked a fat cigar and leaned his elbow on the piano. "Carry on," he said, smiling. "I'm very easily amused."

At the end of my act Van Damm removed his cigar. His smile had disappeared. "Is that moustache your own?" he asked.

I thought he didn't approve of it, and was very anxious to please. No sacrifice was too great. "Yes—but I'm going to shave it off as soon as I'm released from the Air Force."

"Don't do that," Van Damm said. "It's the only funny thing in the act."

"Oh!" I said. I must have looked completely crestfallen.

"Don't misunderstand me," Van Damm said, benignly. "There's the makings of an act there."

After a further audition, which was to be, incidentally, the last I have ever had, Van Damm wrote to Jack Adams and agreed to give me a six-week contract as soon as he had a vacancy. Six weeks after my demobilization, the contract arrived.

But Nobody Cheered

I opened at the Windmill on May 20, 1946. My first professional appearance on the stage was not attended by any violent demonstrations, either for or against. In fact, my first audiences there suffered me in comparative silence, and I was sufficiently alive to the importance of the occasion to be disconcerted by this lack of reaction.

At the end of the day I sat brooding over a cup of tea in the canteen. Van Damm came in, chewing the inevitable cigar. I searched his face with inquiring eyes. "You'll be all right, my boy," he said, "but you will have to cut out all those R.A.F. jokes, you know."

But it soon turned out these were the mainstay of the act. The Windmill is patronized mostly by men, and ninety per cent of our audiences were serving, or had served, in the forces. Any Service gag was, therefore, a certainty, and eventually my act was made up almost entirely of them.

This is not to say that I got a lot of laughs, for the chaps didn't go to laugh at the comics, but to goggle at the girls. I studied the audiences carefully, I learned how they reacted to gags and adapted my material to squeeze out of them what few laughs I could.

I certainly learned a lot at the Windmill, although I cannot say I earned a lot. To be precise, I was paid £25 a week. Though to some this may seem an enviable wage, when you consider that I did six shows a day, six days a week, it works out at about 13s. 11d. per house.

Although I was not overpaid, the frequency with which I had to do my act turned out to be a good thing, for it meant that I could modify my lines and my "business" from hour to hour, retaining the successful bits and throwing out the failures.

As the show was continuous, there was a constant coming and going in the audience, just as in a cinema. The seats banged and squeaked; people bobbed up and down and moved from row to row. The front row was a much-prized vantage point, and there was keen competition to occupy any seat in it that was vacated. Often, men would climb over the seats instead of walking round. I began to ad lib: "I see Lord Burghley has come in again," I would remark when a man hurdled over to occupy another seat. This was always good for a laugh.

"The Dawn Patrol"

In time, my act became full of remarks to the audience and I was always on the alert for opportunities. The front row is very close to the stage, and I made capital of that. "Really, these people down here are so close that I can almost spit on them—frequently do!"

I would go on, "Last week I fell over the footlights and killed six people." Then, staring down into the audience, "why, some of them are still there."

Many Windmill addicts liked to sit through show after show and I chipped them mercilessly for it. "What, you still here? You've been here all day." The people who queued up early to get into the first house at midday I referred to as "The Dawn Patrol."

The Windmill audience is ideal for this type of work. No matter how insulting I became, no one ever answered me back. Perhaps this came of a guilt complex—a desire not to be recognized.

Van Damm must have liked my work at the Windmill, for, after my first contract ran out, he brought me back again and again. I was getting much more money than I had in the Air Force, but the tedious slogging of six shows a day did not appeal to me. Things were pretty cramped backstage, but with the shows coming on top of one another so quickly, I could never stray far from the theatre for a breather. I would pop out for a few minutes and walk down Piccadilly to Green Park, or perhaps dash into a news theatre, or a pub—anything to get away from the theatre.

The last show finished at ten thirty-five at night, and I would race up to "Daddy" Allen's little drinking club just across Great Windmill Street for a quick beer or two. There I often met Harry Secombe and Michael Bentine, who made their name in *The Goon Show*, but were then struggling, as I was, for recognition.

Crazy Off Stage, Too

I liked them both, but on or off the stage they were always acting the fool, and at times they were too much for me. Harry, particularly, was always ruffling his hair, running around wildly and doing crazy imitations. They would exchange mad ideas for their act. Harry would say, "I've got a wonderful idea!"

"What's that?" Michael Bentine would ask.

"You come on suddenly and hit me over the head with a club. It would be a riot!"

Once, Michael slapped me on the back so that I choked over a mouthful of beer. "I've got a *terrific* wheeze!" he exclaimed.

"What is it this time?"

"Well, I'm standing on the stage, you see," Michael said. "I'm singing a song, and forty club-footed Bess-arabian trombonists stomp across the stage."

I looked at him. He seemed quite serious. "Nobody could afford that large a cast," I objected. "That's not commercial."

He gave a maniacal laugh. "Never mind, Jimmy—it's a wonderful idea, anyhow!" To think that he, too, had once been a pilot! His prang must have been worse than mine.

During one of my runs at the Windmill, Peter Waring shared a dressing room with me and several others. I would often see him talking to a very tall, moustached visitor in the canteen. One day Peter said, "Oh, by the way, Jimmy, I'd like you to meet Frank Muir. He writes my radio scripts."

I said that I was delighted to meet him and we settled down to a natter about R.A.F. days and so on. Eventually I told him that I had got a contract to appear as guest on *The Carroll Levis Show*. "The trouble is," I said, "that I can't seem to work out anything new for a script. I've got the angle—it's going to be a lecture—but I'm having difficulty with the actual material."

"Well, let's try to bash out something together and see if I can hit your style," Frank suggested.

"It's nice of you to offer," I said, "but I can't afford to pay much for the script."

"Oh, never mind about that. If we find we can work together, we'll put it on a proper basis later on," Frank said. This was a very handsome offer indeed and, of course, I jumped at it.

At this time, Frank had very little experience in writing comedy material, but he wanted to make his living out of it if he could. Before the war, I learned, he had been a professional photographer. Then, in the Air Force, he continued as a cameraman and soon found himself involved in the training of parachutists at Ringway, near Manchester. His job was to photograph them in the various stages of their descent.

Upside Down Filming

His heart must have been in his work, for he made several jumps himself, and on one occasion even hung upside down through the floor of a Whitley to film the parachutists as they made their split-second exits. It was after he left Ringway, I believe, that he began to take part in camp shows. Then he found that he was able to write comic material both for himself and other members of the concert party.

After he had written several scripts for me, it was quite clear that his material suited me down to the ground. He was able to turn a phrase or write a sentence admirably suited to my particular style of delivery. The trouble was that I was not in any regular B.B.C. show, and the work he did for me was occasional rather than steady—and certainly not profitable. But Frank didn't seem to mind, and as things turned out I soon had plenty of work for him to do.

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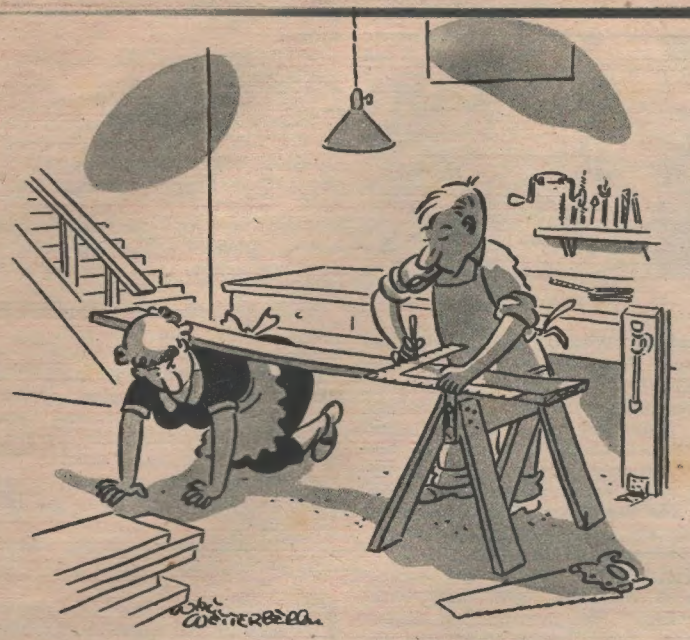
"But of course the boy's old enough to get married, Mabel. He can't go on having fun for ever."



"As if I hadn't enough to do without running down here every five minutes!"

WILD CARGO

Continued from page 14

get the dust off your shoes, you'll maybe learn that God is not mocked."

Trotter laughed and looked across the baked airfield to the control huts. What a hole. A strip of hard clay, a rim of dry trees, and the perpetual, blasted sun. He felt a sudden gratitude that he flew, kept moving, and was going home to the intimacy of his three-roomed flat in a suburb. And Sheila. Then he began to worry again about the baby. Not due for another three weeks, but things could happen. He fidgeted to be off.

But the moment he saw the neat, imperturbable figure of the skipper, Captain Quin, moving towards the aircraft, Trotter was calm again.

CAPTAIN QUIN, dressed in spotless gaberdine and carrying a leather briefcase under his arm, climbed into his aircraft as he would have gone aboard, in the old days, his merchant ship. For him, the air was merely an extension of the sea.

"Everything in order, Mr. Trotter?"

"Everything in order, sir," Trotter meekly replied. Only once, on their first trip, had he accidentally addressed him as "Skipper." Never again. Trotter closed the doors and followed him forward, taking a last look at the crates of monkeys before he shut the compartment off.

"Everything in order, Mr. McGwiggan?"

"Ay, sir."

Quin meticulously began the cockpit drill. Trotter lost his thoughts in the business of lifting an aircraft from the ground—the shudder of one engine, then of the other; the bumpy progress to the end of the runway, the engine tests; then the dart-like rush of the take-off, the moment of lift, the engines settling to a steady note, wheels up. He glanced at the wings stretched comfortingly, firmly; then down at the tiny receding huts, the runways like a cross scratched with a twig upon the yellow ground, the surrounding mangrove swamps; and up at the hot arch of the sky. He relaxed in his seat at the familiarity of it. Behind him was the usual sputtering noise of McGwiggan's radio.

"Ask Mr. McGwiggan," said Quin, "if he can obtain any further meteorological information."

"Expecting trouble, sir?"

"Some odd temperature changes."

Trotter went over to McGwiggan. "Skipper says see if you can get any fresh gen on the met."

They had been flying steadily for more than three hours. Trotter had done a spell, and now Quin had taken over again. They would arrive at the next airfield, the end of the first leg of the flight to London, in precisely one hour and forty-seven minutes. Trotter had no doubt of that. The estimated time of arrival was, for Captain Quin, a bond to be honoured.

Curious chap, thought Trotter, glancing casually at his captain. Trotter had been with him for four months now, and he knew as little of him as on the first day. He was a small, trim man in his late forties. The story went that he had trained at sea, transferring to the air in the grim days when good ships lay up rotting, and the earth's trade stagnated. He had flown ever since, with the regularity and unconcern of a railway-engine driver. At the end of a flight he stepped from his aircraft with his eternal briefcase under his arm, transacted his business in the office, bid a courteous goodbye, and went . . . where? He never said. Trotter had never seen him at a bar, or in an armchair. He discussed nothing, joined nothing. But reliable. There was no man Trotter would sooner fly with.

He gazed down now at the barren pattern of jungle and scrub, and was indulging himself in thoughts of Sheila and his home-coming, when McGwiggan came forward to report.

"Terrible lot of interference, sir," he said, puzzled. "I can't recall the like. I'm receiving so weakly I can't make out the signals."

Trotter, roused by this, gazed round the horizon. For the first time he noted a dark cloud, low in the sky ahead. "Nasty-looking streak of cloud ahead, sir," he commented.

"So I had observed, Mr. Trotter, some minutes since. Make a further attempt, Mr. McGwiggan. Keep at it." Then, to Trotter: "I shall alter course two points to port."

"Very well, sir."

As they approached the cloud, it could be seen as a wide belt, ahead and slightly to starboard, moving, to judge by its trailing edges, at perhaps sixty miles an hour. Trotter regarded it curiously, but without misgiving.

Then he saw that the captain was looking steadily to the port side. There lay another flat smudge against the horizon. This one seemed to draw in rather more quickly. It was of the same nature as the first—flat, darkly swollen, frayed at the edges. It was as though there were two of these clouds, and between them a bright lane along which, at a height of four thousand feet, the aircraft was peacefully travelling.

Instinctively, Trotter looked down. The ground was thickly covered with dark-green trees. A forced landing

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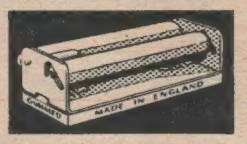

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OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

there, though possible, would be uninviting. There was no airfield or landing-strip nearer than that of their destination. A few miles to the east of their course rose a mountain ridge.

"Looks a bit ropey, sir."

Captain Quin nodded but said nothing. He was gazing straight ahead. And then Trotter perceived a thin, distant shadow joining the two cloud belts. Disquieted, he tried to assess the situation. There were not two clouds, but one large area of disturbance; the aeroplane was penetrating through a rift. Probably, then, it was a cyclonic storm system, clockwise since they were in the southern hemisphere, that had swept in unreported from the vast empty ocean. He put this to Quin.

"Perfectly correct, Mr. Trotter."

"D'you reckon we can fly round it, sir? Or how about putting back?"

"Both courses, if you trouble to calculate, are denied to us. A question of fuel, Mr. Trotter."

"Then we shall just have to fly through it."

"Precisely," said Quin.

They went on in silence for a few minutes. The cloud was now closing in like a pincer. Quin was steadily gaining height. Trotter peered into the approaching cloud. It was like a cliff, the top gleaming in the sun, and impalpable blackness below.

Suddenly there was a bump that jarred his jaws. He glanced inquiringly at Quin. "Better strap yourself in," was all the captain said. Trotter fastened the strap around his stomach, taking comfort from the rough thickness of the canvas.

The aircraft was still gaining height. At six thousand feet it pierced the top edge of the cloud into dazzling light, and for a few moments the whole formation was spread to their gaze.

Trotter was appalled. Ahead of them the cloud piled up, higher and higher, until it gathered into a whirling column like a giant sand-devil, as thick round at the apex as at the base, towering, at a quick reckoning, to at least two thousand feet above them. Then the curtain closed over again, leaving them almost in darkness. At that moment the aircraft was staggered by a bump so violent that every joint seemed to crack. And then by another. Trotter imagined for a moment that the aircraft had overturned and was flying crazily upside down. He quickly sought the luminous dials of the instruments, and saw they had lost nearly two thousand feet.

Quin, he realized, was speaking to him. "She's dragging, Mr. Trotter. The freight must have broken loose. Go aft and secure it."

For a moment, Trotter gazed stupidly at him. Then, "O.K.," he said. Clutching hard at a rail, he hauled himself aft. In the bucking and slithering of the aircraft he had the sensation of helplessness in his legs that a deep-sea diver has.

He looked down at McGwiggan as he came by him, but said nothing. He had no desire just then for prophetic utterances. McGwiggan, he thought, was afraid. He quickly reached for a new grip, and dragged himself to the door of the freight compartment. He pushed it open and stumbled in.

It was black. Stupidly, he had not thought of that. He reached for the flashlight in the pocket of his shorts. As he did so, a crate slid forward, crushing his leg against the door. He got the light on, and heaved the crate from his leg.

THE beam from the torch showed that half a dozen of the crates had broken free. As the aircraft floundered, the untethered crates were sliding backwards and forwards with long hissing groans and thuds. Each time they drove aft, they battered the crates that were still secure.

Trotter flashed his light upwards. There were the monkeys, clinging and chattering, their sharp cries echoed by those still fastened in the crates.

The aircraft plunged; loose crates came rushing forward. He jumped on to the seat that ran down the side of the compartment, clutching with one hand at a metal edge that cut into his fingers. A monkey leaped for the same grip. Trotter knocked it off with his torch. Two more came jumping, one clinging to his arm and biting into the sleeve. He flung it wildly from him. As it fell, the loose mass of crates ran swiftly forward and over it.

Hastily, Trotter dowsed the torch. Perhaps it was the light they were coming for. He pressed his body against the fuselage for some sort of hold as it twisted and slid and bumped. His mind was filled with the grinding noise of the crates, and with terror of the monkeys. He almost screamed as one of the rough, sinewy little bodies pitched against his legs. He kicked spasmodically.

Another thudded on to his stomach. Then he felt the grip of little prehensile paws on his shoulders, at his throat, in his hair. He thumbed on the light at the distorted, dwarfish faces closing around him. All his control went. He struck out with one arm, flailing, hitting nothing.

At that moment the aircraft pitched and seemed to roll over. Trotter lost his grip and fell upon the crates, taking three or four of the monkeys with him, biting and tearing. They were tossed like an old bundle back and forth along the compartment. The torch was struck from his hand, pitching among the crates aft. It fell to the deck, shining with a pale beam at the writhing clutter of fur and faces.

As he was thrown forward, he grasped for the handle of the door, missed it, but managed to cling to a brace near the floor. He hung on without conscious purpose, his legs fending off the wreckage that pounded at him. He could not get up. He lay there resigned. The stickiness around his mouth, he realized, was blood.

Then he was aware of a hand grasping his shirt and dragging him forward. And he was lying on the floor of the radio compartment. McGwiggan crouched over him, trying to lift him.

"The monkeys," he choked. "Shut the door."

"It's shut. Can you not get up?"

Slowly he raised himself. He took in Captain Quin's back, strained as if by great effort against his seat. Trotter pulled himself forward to Quin, and reported: "The crates are smashed up, and the bloody monkeys are everywhere. Nothing could fasten that lot again. . . . Can we make it, sir?"

Quin said nothing. Outside it was black, but the instruments were enough. The little luminous wings in the panel dial were rocking and rolling against the tiny horizon. They were at three thousand feet, and Quin was struggling for height. He saw Trotter's glance and said curtly: "The mountains."

"The mountains? Are we that far off course?"

"I don't know. I can only hope not."

HE could say no more, for the aircraft began to soar upwards at a fantastic pace, Quin striving only to keep it straight and level. Trotter got it then. They were being sucked in the upward central stream of the system. He closed his eyes, numb.

The aircraft seemed to hover, almost to spin. He opened his eyes, and saw six thousand. Then, with a lurch that threw him against the panel, it dived. This is it, he thought. Glancing at Quin, straining gingerly at the control with one foot thrust forward, he knew that he thought so, too.

But at two thousand the dive flattened gradually, and one thousand feet farther down, Quin had the aircraft level again, and was once more tempting it upwards.

"I must have that freight secured, Mr. Trotter."

"But how? It's smashed to bits. No wire will hold it."

"The baggage net."

Trotter was silent. Then he nodded. "I'll try."

"I'll come with you," said a voice. McGwiggan was close behind him, clutching a spanner in one hand.

"All right. Thanks." Trotter managed to pull the baggage net from the locker, passing one end to the other man.

"Two-thirds of the way back," he said, "there's a stanchion. Fix the net top first. You take port side, I'll go starboard."

McGwiggan nodded and shoved a torch in his belt. Trotter wedged

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himself by the door, listening, trying to pick the moment when an upward movement of the aircraft would slide the crates aft.

"Now," called McGwiggan. Trotter pushed the door open, and they both stumbled in.

"Up on the seat," he yelled.

They were both up, one on each side of the aircraft, as the crates slithered forward again. McGwiggan struck out grimly at the first monkey to leap at him. Trotter was working his way along the seat, clinging desperately, ignoring the assault of the monkeys. At last he got his fingers on the stanchion, jabbing the wire tag of the net through the gap, hauling it tight. He put all his weight on it. It held. A monkey came flying and smothered his face. He tore it away and flung it on to the crates.

He looked across at McGwiggan in the tremulous light of his torch. "O.K.?" he cried. The other could not hear him, but understood, and jerked his thumb up.

"Jump with me," yelled Trotter. He poised on the seat, watching the wreckage. It was slipping about at the forward end. The aircraft must be diving. He waited in agony. Would it never pull out?

Then there was a violent thump, the whole thing seemed to corkscrew, and the wreckage rushed aft with a grinding roar.

"Now," shouted Trotter, flinging himself to the floor, thrusting the corner of the net through a metal strut, hauling with all his strength to keep it there.

The wreckage shifted and groaned. It was coming again. McGwiggan was still fumbling with his corner of the net, but as the wreckage struck he tumbled on his back, still holding on.

The crates smashed angrily at the net now stretched across the compartment.

Trotter was frightened. If the net gave, the whole lot would rush over the two of them.

The wreckage retreated, gathered itself for another spring, and leaped again. The net still held. At the next lull, Trotter whipped some wire around the fastening. Then he was pitched over against McGwiggan and they lay there, watching the net in the torchlight.

"It'll hold," grunted McGwiggan at last.

As he lay gasping, Trotter stared at it, fascinated. Then came a dazzling flash of light. He flung one arm around his eyes to protect them, and crouched, sobbing, waiting for the end. Nothing happened. And the noise, he slowly realized, had diminished. He relaxed his arm and peeped. The dazzling light was sunlight, coming in through the small windows.

Next moment he and Mac were up, dancing and laughing, hitting each other and yelling. "We're through," shouted Trotter, and "Praise be," cried McGwiggan. Behind the net most of the monkeys were scrambling over the wreckage, which lay still. The few outside the net did not matter.

Trotter hurried forward. Captain Quin was sitting there, intent as ever upon his task. The wings of the aircraft were stretched comfortingly in the bright air. Trotter looked down. A couple of miles ahead, the cross of the runways was blessedly stretched upon the ground. Quin was getting ready for the circuit. McGwiggan was happily back at his panel.

As Trotter looked more closely, he saw that the tiny huts of the airfield were scattered in an untidy mess towards a belt of uprooted trees.

"Blimey, skipper," he said, unthinkingly, "how did we ever come through that lot?"

Captain Quin regarded him disapprovingly. Or was there an embryo smile behind those prim lips? "We are eight and a half minutes overdue, Mr. Trotter," he said. THE END

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"John Bull" Announces . . .

. . . . that unique and elegant 2-in-1 CORONATION SURPRISE SOUVENIRS, now being fashioned by London craftsmen, will be presented to the 50 chief Runners-up in *Bullets* this week.

Not to be sold at any shop, of truly historic character, lasting value and obvious usefulness, these *Bullets* SURPRISE SOUVENIRS will not be posted to recipients until just before June 2; their secret will be out in *Bulletin* Coronation Issue.

"Bullets" Winners 1,868

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Television: E. N. Abbott, 257 Whitehouse Lane, Sheffield:

A Little Unbroken Peace, A Shattered Dream!

£25 plus Television: Mrs. P. Dunford, 39 Windsor Road, Boscombe: AT HYDE'S MERCY — THROUGH JEKYLL'S DISCOVERIES, MANKIND!

£10 plus Television: C. Bangham, Galde Cottage, Canonsfield Road, Welwyn, Herts: WHEELS OF PROGRESS —IN AFRICA, GRINDING KNIVES?

OTHER AWARDS: £5: Miss D. L. Brew, 94 Elm Vale, Liverpool: WHEELS OF PROGRESS—KEEP ROLLING —KEEP CONTROLLING! £5: E. H. Cook, "Homecroft," New Park Road, Harefield, Middx: STANDING BY THE NATIONALISED—INDUSTRIES, TOO MANY "FOREMEN"? £5: Mrs. P. Ellis, 25 Woodland Avenue, Huthwaite: A LITTLE OVERDONE—FEAR OF "WHAT'S COOKING"? £5: A. Houghton, 118 Blaguegate Lane, Lathom, Ormskirk: SLOW POISON—IS *State* "SPOON" ADMINISTERING? £5: S. C. Mitchell, 28 Gwern Berthi Road, Cwmtillery: DOWN IN SLEEPYTOWN—"PROGRESSIVES" DIDN'T GET FAR! £5: E. H. Pack, 145 Hull Road, Anlaby, Hull: THE POLICEMAN'S WIFE — DREADING DARKNESS—*Hubby* ALONE! £5: W. Terris, 45 Queen Street, Edinburgh: A LITTLE TRICKIER—*Cabinet* FORMING NEW *France*!

For ten winners of £2 10s. see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 50 Prizes of 10s. and 1,500 "Use-as-you-choose" Awards have also been posted.

HOW TO WIN

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line —then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

Gentleman John
Door To Success
Crime Against Humanity
Her Hour
The Go-slow Brigade
When We Look Back
Coronation Headache
Sound Of The Trumpet
Neglected
Cupid's Victim
Pocket Your Pride And
That Coelacanth
Official After Official
Won't Play
Visitor From Mars
Coming Out
No Good, These Days
Most Undignified
Steadily
On The Edge Of The Kerb

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Dad's Idea Of.....
Had To.....Something
.....As It Is
A Second.....
In Mrs. Mop's.....
They Have Their....., But

NOTE. You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in the same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets," 1,873 (or Xword 825), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated March 14, and in JOHN BULL dated March 21), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 7, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,873 result.)

CASH AND CORONATION CAKES

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 825

1. Words that do this may be quoted against a man later
4. One is commonly bought with strings attached
5. Slim one may last a long time
8. One can make a habit of it
9. Court pays considerable attention to
10. Advances made depend to some extent on
13. Climbers may find one on mountain a suitable place for resting and eating
14. It's by no means impossible to cut

Down Clues

1. Old-fashioned couples took it for granted that a child would be this
2. Country people are more familiar with them than city folk
3. Runs would not surprise you in this
6. Cost of these can be most helpfully reduced by season
7. Lost in a dark one, a man doesn't know which way to turn
11. If colourless, is unlikely to leave much of an impression
12. Apt to become cruel

£100 FIRST PRIZE AWARDS VALUE £25 amongst 1st Runners-up CORONATION CAKES

All winners of prizes value £1 and over will receive, shortly before Coronation Day, an ICED and richly ornamented CELEBRATION CAKE.

Up to 500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES —one for each 2nd Runner-up

XWORD 820 RESULT

WINNING WORDS, ACROSS: 1, Bungle. 4, Set. 5, Shell. 8, Moue. 11, Birds. 12, Parks. 13, Bet. DOWN: 1, Barker. 2, Grass. 3, Extend. 4, Smells. 6, Kegs. 7, Food. 9, Drab. 10, Nap.

TWO £100 SHARERS (entries differing at one point only from Competitors' Answers above): Mrs. K. F. Halliday, 3 Riverdale Gardens, East Twickenham; Miss M. Trenerry, 1 Monk's Orchard, Beckenham, Kent.

For entries differing at two points only, 37 entrants share awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up. Signpost Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

CORONATION CAKES EXCLUSIVELY for XWORDS

1 B	L		2 S	T	E	R				3
O	S					4 V	I		L	A
		5	O	G	U	E			A	T
N	6 F		C	O				7		C
			K		8	L	O	T	H	
9	R	E	S	S				O	H	
	E	M		10 L	E			D	E	11 R
I	S		12			A			N	O
L		P	A	S	T	E	D			
13 L		D	G	E	825	14 W	I			E

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and form strictly copyright **825** Closing Postmark MON., FEB. 23

I enclose P.O. value ..... No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.).

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated March 7.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

TV OFFER

COMING NEXT WEEK!

EXAMPLE ..... 6d.

BULLET

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... 6d.

B.

EX. ..... } EXTRA TWO FOR 6d.

B.

EX. .....

B.

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value..... No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

.....

1,873 Closing Postmark MON., FEB. 23

CORONATION NEWS—SECURE YOUR "BULLETIN"! For practical help with *Bullets* and Crosswords, stick 2½d. stamp on right—this brings you *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated March 7. **686**

STICK 2½d. STAMP here for "*Bulletin*"

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